OUTDOOR MEN AND MINDS

WILLIAM L. STIDGER

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Brother Bill's book
to
Arthur Butcher
Loomis
Dr C. H. Walter,
May our Love for His
Trees, Mountains, Stars and Skies
And our Love for each
other never faulter.

Christmas Dec 1920

OTHER BOOKS BY WM. L. STIDGER

GIANT HOURS WITH POET PREACHERS

STAR DUST FROM THE DUGOUTS

OUTDOOR MEN AND MINDS

By
WILLIAM L. STIDGER

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Dedicated to My Father

LEROY L. STIDGER

Who for Many Years Was
A Father-Mother to
Five Little Tots, and Who
Gave to Them a Heritage
Of Home and Love Which is
Better Than Gold

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Photo by H. Hugo

The vespers of a tree

THE VESPERS OF A TREE

AT evening time along the sea
I like to watch an ancient tree,
Where gently at the close of day
It bows its leafy head to pray.

This is the Vesper Hour of trees;
There is an Angelus that rings
With sweetest music through the leaves—
An evening wind that softly sings.

Stand all alone and silently,
In mood of prayer and reverently,
And you shall see that gray old tree
At Vespers bowing wistfully.

You'll hear a whisper soft and low,
As of One speaking tenderly,
And in the wandering winds that blow
You'll hear God talking to that tree.

OPENING THE DOOR

By Bishop Wm. A. Quayle

TO write an introduction to this book written by William L. Stidger is to be classed under the Scripture heading, "A Superfluity of Naughtiness." Reading the chapter captions suffices to head one straight into the book, like a diver plunging into the sea.

Such as have read his war characterizations and his interviews of soul with the poets of our own times, and his wanderings in the Orient looking for Christ along the ways of loneliness, will need no informing that this book will be worth reading.

This author has a seeing eye, and a hearing ear, and an attent heart, and a poet pulse, and a sense of yearning which is on all elect spirits. He loves many things and matters and folks. He is companionable. His enthusiasms are wholesome and contagious.

It will be sweet to be with him out of doors, with him anywhere, and will prove a sure

delight to be with him in the Bible out of doors. I open the door into this winsome, worthy book which shall bring us to many a way and place where we shall meet God face to face.

INTRODUCTION

RAYMOND ROBINS speaks in his remarkable series of articles on Russia of the "Indoor Diplomacy" that so bungled affairs during the crucial days of the Great War. And he avers that "indoor diplomacy" is the direct result of an "indoor mind." Certainly, the Book of books was not thought out, conceived, nurtured or given birth by men with "indoor minds"; rather it was produced by men whose hearts and dreams and hopes and thoughts were washed by the cleansing rains, swept pure by the white winds, sanctified by the purifying sunshine, baptized by the holy dews of night and morning, lighted by star light, perfumed by blossoming flowers and trees, made strong by the iron of mountains, and shot full of dreams by those who lived amid the stars. The Bible is an out-of-doors book.

It starts out in its first chapters with a great outdoor story of creation and it ends up with a great outdoor vision of things to be. The great incidents of the Bible occur in the great open. The great moments in the life of the great

characters of the Bible, including Jesus the Christ, are staged along the highways, beside rivers and lakes, on some mountain height, or in some green meadow.

We have this thought of the Bible as an out-of-doors book in a general way, but when one starts to investigate the thesis carefully he is actually startled with the avalanche of evidence that sweeps down upon him to pile up facts supporting this truth.

The book of Genesis is itself a great ocean. One walks along its shores all through that book and hears the first singing of the new-born surf and the play of tides from the new moon and the warmth of sunlight from the new-born sun.

Every single incident of the book of Exodus is an out-of-doors incident. He who doubts this statement has but to read this wonderful story from beginning to end. It deals with out-of-doors men. men who never knew what a roof was.

And while Leviticus deals largely with laws, it too is a great open-air book, and "flocks" and "herds" and "harvests" and "grains" make up a large part of its thought.

Samuels, Kings, and Chronicles too are largely out-of-doors chronicles, for they deal

with kingdoms and with wars; and wars must needs be fought out of doors.

Job is the only great drama in the world of art that is too big to be staged any place but out of doors. You can't confine a whirlwind indoors and you can't stage a sky full of stars within four meager walls.

The Psalms are limited only by the starry skies, "the winds before the dawn," when "the morning stars sing together," while "the hart panteth after the waterbrook."

The great incidents of Isaiah are continually happening in the out-of-doors; on mountaintops, along city streets, accompanied by storms, lightnings, thunderings.

The Prophets, each one of them and all of them, were great, rugged men of skies and mountains and "trimmers of sycamore trees." Most of the disciples, Jesus Christ himself, and Paul the "tent-maker," were men of the fields and highways. Jesus was born in a stable and died on a cross and ascended from a mountain peak. Paul was converted on a highway, and the first four were called from the seashore.

The book of Revelation is a great Yosemite, with voices, voices, voices sounding everywhere.

No indoor mind can fully understand the

Bible. Almost every parable that Jesus spoke was a Parable of the Out-of-Doors. He was talking to nomads and to agriculturists.

The great figures of speech of the Bible are "shepherd," "herdsman," "vineyard," "Saviour."

We never think of Christ as belonging indoors. He walked the highways, he prayed on the mountainsides, he went into a garden, and he died on a lonely hill. The few times that he went inside one might count on the fingers of one hand. We never think of God as an indoors God. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Paul, Moses, John of Patmos, Jesus the Christ—they were all too big to be confined. They would not have felt at home indoors. We cannot conceive of them belonging at any time inside of a church or a house. They worshiped out of the walls of their times, they prophesied, they preached from pulpits of great rocks and mountainsides. Even David, the gentle poet of them all, was from his days of herding sheep to the end an out-of-doors man.

And because I have been so deeply impressed with this great truth I make bold to call attention to the fact that the greatest incidents of the Book of books occurred amid the mountains, along the rivers and lakes; in the deserts,

on the seas, and have to do with the trees, the stars, the birds, and the storms of the Bible.

For perchance, when one catches this breath of the good God's great open, and feels its sunshine on his face, ever thereafter he may not be able to sail a storm, or stand beneath the shade of a tree, or hear sweet singing of a bird, or sound of surf from sea or forest, catch a daydawn, or a starlit night that Christ and God seem not nearer. It is so with this humble man:

I never see a lake or tree
But Christ is very near to me;
Nor ride an ocean in a storm
But through the dark I see His form;
Remembering in the other years
He walked the waves and calmed the fears
Of men like unto me;
And died upon a tree.

I never see a shining star
On the horizon, still and far,
Nor walk the fields at night,
But I can see the light
Which shone so long ago
On watching shepherds there below;
And angel voices sing to me
Of Him who came triumphantly.

No sunset glows along the sky
Nor soft wind passes by
But somehow He is very near
And close to me; and dear

As memories of other days
When He too walked these wind-washed ways
Of earth and felt the glow
And glory of the world I know.

I never walk along the way
Of mountain paths when somber day
Has died behind the west;
And feel the touch of earth's warm breast
But I remember 'twas His way:
He sought the mountain sides to pray
Beneath the trees and stars of night;
To wait the dawn and catch the light!

I never see a grove of trees
But He is there upon His knees;
Nor walk, however joyfully,
Through garden ways but I can see
My Christ in His Gethsemane;
His triumph and His victory;
The rock-strewn pathway of His tears,
The garden of His human tears.

So rocks and lakes and storms and trees;
So meadow-lands and stars and seas!
Flowers and birds and mountain-ways;
The dawning and the dying days;
The silent watches of the night;
The darkness, fogs—the clouds—the light
Through magic mists of memory
Bring Jesus very close to me."

The author desires to thank the publishers for permission to quote the following: Extracts from John Muir, granted by Houghton Mifflin

Company; the paragraphs on Brashear, the star-man, granted by the American Magazine; the lines from Robert Service, granted by Barse & Hopkins; "Trees," by Joyce Kilmer, granted by George H. Doran Company; and the storm description in the chapter on "storms," taken from "The Land of To-Morrow," the author of which is Robert Louis Stevenson, published by George H. Doran Company, and to Luther Burbank, who granted the author an interview and gave permission to quote the paragraphs in the chapter on that great scientist.

Photo by William L. Stidger

"And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations"

CHAPTER I

THE TREES OF THE BIBLE

"I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

"A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

"A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

"A tree, that may, in Summer, wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

"Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

"Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree."

SO writes Joyce Kilmer, he who died on the battlefields of tree-dead France.

And surely God must have had a joy in making trees; such joy as a poet has in making poems in his small way; and surely God must have wanted to call the attention of the world to His trees and to their spiritual

lessons, for so many times in the Book of books He puts it into the hearts of those who speak and write His words to use trees as figures of speech to make emphatic or tender or pertinent some great spiritual truth that He wishes to convey to mankind down through the coming generations.

And so God made his trees not only to be useful to mankind with their food and shade, but he also made them to teach mankind spiritual truths.

The Bible, from beginning to end, is full of trees. The Bible is like a great highway from the beginning of time until the end of Revelation, and all along that great highway from the Atlantic Coast of Genesis and the Creation, to the Pacific Coast of the book of Revelation, shading the humanity that walks its myriad way, feeding and comforting, are trees—trees of every kind.

Some of the trees of the Holy Land and Syria, where Jesus was wont to walk, are: tamarisk, orange, lemon, citrus, maple, sumach, moringa, acacia, almond, cherry, plum, apple, pear, hawthorn, olive, fir, elm, mulberry, fig, sycamore, walnut, alder, ironwood, hazel, oak, beech, willow, poplar, cypress, juniper, yew, pine, cedar, spruce, palm.

Hastings says that the mountains and hills and valleys of the Holy Land are now for the most part bare of their trees. In the days of Christ they were covered with great forests.

One of the most beautiful legends I take from Hastings. It is that of "The Tree," which is by inference "The Cross." "The name no doubt originated because of the practice of employing a tree in case of haste for the purpose of crucifixion."

Many references in the New Testament refer to "the tree," meaning the cross of Christ.

In mediæval times there was a legend which told of how Adam, when he was dying, sent his son Seth to the angel that guarded paradise to beg a bough from the Tree of Life. The angel granted this request, but when Seth got back to his father, he found him dead. So he planted the bough of the tree on Adam's grave. In the course of time Solomon was building the temple and cut the tree down to use in the temple, but it refused to be fitted into any part of the temple, so he used it for a bridge over a stream. By and by the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon, and refused to walk over that tree because she recognized that it was the tree on which the Saviour was to die. Long afterward the Jews took the tree and cast it into a

stagnant pool. From that time on the tree gave this pool miraculous healing powers; an angel descended from time to time and troubled the waters, and whoever stepped into the waters immediately after this troubling was healed of diseases. There it remained until Christ was crucified, and then it was taken from the pool and fashioned into a cross on which the Saviour of the world died.

Hastings also calls attention to the interesting fact that "The fathers loved to contrast the first tree whose fruit brought death into the world, and the second tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations."

Old Testament Trees

The first reference to trees is in Genesis 3. 22-24. It is a figure of speech that runs all through the Bible. It gets its start early.

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken."

It is an intensely dramatic picture and it is followed by one just as dramatic; even spec-

tacular. It is the picture of a flaming sword guarding that important tree of life:

"So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

As it is to-day both the living and the dead find rest under the beneficent shade of the quiet old trees. Many a child has known the joy of a shady tree after a long, hard, hot walk on a summer day. And we who study trees to-day must remember that Palestine is a hot country and the shade of a friendly tree was more than welcome. And what man, woman, or child in this day and nation who does not have a memory of a little God's Acre shaded by protecting trees?

All over New England one remembers the little cemeteries in a circle of pine trees where the dead rest with patches of sunlight playing on white, moss-touched tombs. Some of them were leaders in the Revolutionary War; some of them were great poets; some were Presidents and some were musicians; but all of them rest where the blue flower raises its petals in spring-time, and where a carpet of pine needles makes soft the tread of reverent feet. Ofttimes stone walls hold the world at respectful distance, and

through the centuries they sleep beneath the trees. In fact, it seems to be a well established custom to surround cemeteries with trees.

So it was in Old Testament times. Both the dead and the living rested beneath the shady trees. Two references will give these pictures:

First Samuel, chapter thirty-one, verse thirteen, gives this vivid picture: "And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh."

There is a beautiful picture of the visit of the three angels and Jehovah to Abraham. The story is in the eighteenth chapter of Genesis, and it starts off: "And Jehovah appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre:[1] and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day."

What child or grown-up shall ever cease to be stirred with Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the tree, as described in the fourth chapter of Daniel? "Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the

[1]Revised Version, "oaks of Mamre."

field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it."

The Bible reader will remember the rest of the story. It was that a man appeared out of heaven and cut this tree down, and scattered its leaves over the face of the earth, but left the roots thereof. The old king wanted an interpretation of what his dream meant and brave Daniel told him without a moment's hesitation. He told him that it meant that the tree was the king, and that God would cut him down in spite of his power until he recognized Jehovah as King over all the earth; but that if he did recognize him, the promise of the remaining root was that his kingdom should grow again.

The fable of Jotham in the ninth chapter of Judges is intensely interesting from the standpoint of the story itself, without reference to its interpretation, which is too complicated for this chapter—a matter which more rightly belongs to another type of book. But it is interesting in reference to the subject. It starts in the eighth verse and is a simple story:

"The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree

said unto them, Should I leave my fatness wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my new wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

The juniper, which is called a tree, is not really a tree, so I make no reference to it. It was merely a low bush. Many people believe that the Lebanon is a tree, because they have so often heard quoted the expression, "the trees of Lebanon"; but a careful investigation will discover that Lebanon is a mountain, and the figure of speech merely refers to the trees that grow on this rugged range—"the cedars of Lebanon." And some of the descriptions of

storms sweeping through the trees of Lebanon are among the most vivid descriptions in the whole Bible. These occur in the Psalms, and no storm descriptions have ever surpassed them.

Amos was called a "trimmer" (or pincher) of sycamore trees. It was a profession. It was a most humble profession. The "trimmer," or "pincher," went about pinching the bark of the tree, and a fruit grew from that pinch. It was a fruit eaten by the very poor, but nevertheless had a certain food value.

A tree had much to do with Jeremiah's call to be a prophet. The sight of an almond tree, which was the first tree to put out leaves in early spring, suggested the care and ever kindly presence of Jehovah. He speaks of this in the first chapter and eleventh verse:

"Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it."

This undoubtedly made a vivid, a burning impression on the great prophet Jeremiah.

Many times Jeremiah refers to trees to impress his lessons on his hearers "whilst their children remember their altars and their

Asherim by the green trees upon the high hills."

The New Testament Tree Scenes

All told, there are more than five hundred references in the Bible to trees which the writer has found. These take the form of figures of speech, of great scenes which have taken place under trees, of names of the various trees of Palestine and Syria, of great spiritual teachings and parables. The Old Testament is full of such references, but the New Testament is not far behind it.

There is the beautiful story of Jesus and the early morning walk and the parable of the fig tree. There is the story of the tree up into which Zacchæus, a small man, climbed, that he might see over the heads of those who crowded about Jesus as he passed; there is the story of Jesus calling Nathanael—"When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee;" there is the story of the little trees in Gethsemane, and at last of the tree on which Jesus was slain on Calvary.

It is a striking thing that attracts the attention, not only of "the fathers" but also of the sons and of the succeeding generations of preachers and prophets and authors, that in the

opening chapters of Genesis comes that great, striking figure of speech, "the tree of life," with its vivid story, and also at the very end of the Bible, in the last chapter of Revelation, in the vision of John, a final reference is made to the "tree of life." Thus is the first chapter linked with the last, although many centuries intervened, an infinite number of things had come to pass, and the book had passed through innumerable hands:

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bore twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

Contemporary Literature Uses the Figure of Trees for Spiritual Lessons

It is fascinating to see how from the opening chapters of the Bible to the last chapter the tree is used as a medium of conveying great spiritual truths to humanity. It is used by poet, prophet, and preacher; it is used in the Psalms, in Proverbs, in Job, in the prophecies, and in the New Testament. It is frequently

used by Jesus. It is also often used by contemporary poets for the purpose of conveying spiritual truths.

I have referred already to perhaps the most popular of all poems on the tree, that written by the late Joyce Kilmer, who seems to sum up all of the spiritual interpretation of the life of a tree in his wonderful couplets, ending with that memorable phrase of humility in the presence of a tree:

> "Poems are made by fools like me,
> But only God can make a tree."

One can never think of trees and their spiritual lessons that one does not think of

> "Winds of the east, winds of the west,
> Wandering to and fro,
> Chant your hymns in our topmost limbs
> That the world of men may know
> That the lordly Pine was the first to come
> And the Pine shall be last to go.
>
> "Sun, moon, and stars give answer:
> 'Shall we not staunchly stand
> Even as now, forever,
> Lords of the last lone land;
> Sentinels of the stillness,
> Wards of the wilder strand?'"
>
> (*The Spell of the Yukon.*)

Bryant's immortal line, "The groves were God's first temples," and Hood's boyhood

memory sweeps us back with a sigh to other, sweeter days:

"I remember, I remember
The fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their tender tops
Were close against the sky.
It was a childish fancy,
But it gives me little joy
To know I'm further off from heaven
Than when I was a boy."

Alexander Smith repeats the thought that Joyce Kilmer suggests of the trees praying:

"The trees were gazing up into the sky,
Their bare arms stretched in prayer for the snows."

Nor shall one ever cease to hear the music of Sidney Lanier's "Little gray leaves that were kind to Him," and "The olive trees" which "had a mind to Him," as "Into the woods He went."

Spiritual Lessons from the Bible

Lesson I. The Good Man Shall Grow Like a Mighty Tree

This spiritual figure of speech runs like the sound of sweet music in the treetops all through the Book. It is not forgotten and unto the last a sweet note of music—the music of hope—is played. It sings itself like the sound of a

silvery stream beside which "the tree of life" grows, bearing its twelve manner of fruits. Perhaps the most simple and the most beautiful putting of God's promise to the good man is that found in Jeremiah, chapter seventeen, verses 7, 8: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

Lesson II. A Tree Is Known by the Fruit It Yields

This great spiritual lesson is repeated over and over through the Bible. Writer after writer uses the figure; poet after poet since has copied the thought—that a tree is known by its fruit. If a man is good, he brings forth good fruit; if he is bad, he brings forth bad fruit. A good heart will blossom and come forth to fruitage with love and tenderness and kindly and kingly deeds. A man with evil in his heart will give forth hate and hurt and heartache and heartbreak in life. Matthew 12. 33 says, "The tree is known by its fruits."

Lesson III. A Tree that Yields No Fruit Should Be Cut Down

This fruit may be the fruit of shade or the fruit of food; but no tree has any right to live and absorb moisture and health from the soil and not produce. This lesson might be carried out into its social implications: the wealthy, who live as a burden on society, and who never produce, but always live as parasites on social life; the criminal; the selfish. It has tremendous social spiritual imports.

Lesson IV. There Is Hope for Even a Half-Dead Tree if It Be Grafted on a New Tree

So, in one figure that the Bible uses, an almond tree is asked if it does not want to be grafted on to the olive tree that it may "enrich itself from my fatness." And so a human life that is half dead and fruitless and worthless, grafted on the tree of the living Christ, may yet live to redeem and refresh the world. In a later chapter on Luther Burbank we shall see how this great plant-breeder uses this spiritual truth.

Lesson V. "My Beloved Is an Apple Tree"

We have a friend in the church who preached a sermon on this text. His name is

Huse. He took the words: "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." It is from the Song of Solomon, the second chapter and the third verse, and it is sweet music and a captivating figure of speech. Our friend calls attention to the fact of boyhood memories of apple trees. He says, "It is a friendly tree." It is like a mother hen. It tucks you under the shade of its wings. It is like a friendly father. It lets you climb all over it. It is like an old family umbrella; it shelters everybody. It is beautiful with blossom in the spring when it feeds the bees. It is beautiful with fruit in the fall when it feeds humanity. It is beautiful with snow in the winter; with snow blossoms and snow flowers. It is beautiful with memory all the years when its sight has gone from you. Then he calls attention to the "Apple Tree Man." He's a good kind to marry. He's a good kind for a preacher. He's a good kind for a city manager. He's a good kind for a husband.

Tree Friends

I remember an old early harvest apple tree in an orchard of boyhood days; I remember an

oak that grew at the top of the old Indian mound. I remember a beech, with white, smooth bark that we used to cut our initials in of a summer afternoon when time was all gold and silver and we had plenty of it. I remember an old willow tree that overhung the "Old Sheep Hole." I remember a giant pine that used to swing and sway in winter winds against the walls of the house where as a boy I slept. I remember that wild, brilliant crimson blanketed Flame of the Forest of the tropic lands; it burned its beauteous way into my soul forever. I cannot forget the graceful, singing, swinging, swaying, slender grace of the bamboo on many a tropical stream; born in the springtime, matured by midsummer, more like a flower than a tree. Nor shall anyone be so dead of soul as to forget the coconut palm in its myriad fruitful, bounteous, beautiful varieties throughout the Orient. I remember, and shall always remember, a pepper tree in San José.

I have awakened at night and have seen this pepper tree swinging in the moonlit winds its leaves like dancing fairies. I have seen it dripping with rains. I have seen a song sparrow take a bath in its leaves by sitting on a tiny limb and shaking the water from the limb above—an improvised shower bath. I have

seen it when it was glinting in the sunlight. I have seen it with the street light shining on it. I have seen it when, at evening time, it looked like a Christmas tree. I have seen it swayed to the ground under winter winds and I have seen it when the winds before the dawn whispered sweetly to its myriad leaves. I have seen it when the winds of twilight were no less gentle with it than the fading light itself.

I have seen the giant Eucalyptus swaying and swinging and creaking in the winds of winter, storm-tossed but staunch. I have seen trees when they made me lift my shoulders a bit straighter; when they made me feel more like a man as I watched them battle with the storms.

I have seen the old Cedars of Lebanon on the coasts near Monterey, when I took off my hat to them for their century-old battle with the storms from the sea. I have seen them when they had bent their sturdy backs so low that their breasts were pressed to the ground, but in the battle with the winds their feet were planted like a giant's feet to fight, fight, fight the storms that would break them. I have seen the lonely pines far up the mountain sides at the edge of cultivation and the timber lines fighting the last battles against the heights. I have

seen old redwoods, fallen a thousand years, still hard in their hearts and firm because they had lived well their lives. I have seen giant Sequoias—the Sphinx of the living world, a Sphinx that was a sturdy giant when Christ walked the earth; I have seen them shake their shaggy heads defiantly in the winds and storm like some old bear of the forests.

I have been moved to awe and wonder at these gigantic hosts of trees. Some of them I have known intimately; some of them I have known from afar. Some of them have made me lift my soul toward the stars and have made me look into the very eyes of God himself. I have looked on a New England hillside in fall time when the leaves of the trees were like a great Oriental tapestry, myriad-hued with crimson, gold, yellow, brown, blue, white; and such beauty as would fill a soul with silent weeping.

I have heard trees sing an eternal song of beauty and wonder. I have seen them turned into great Æolian harps by winter and spring and summer winds. I have had my soul stirred to its depths by the sweet music that the wind makes in many trees; a music like the surf song; a music like a harp soughing and singing.

And this stirring of the soul has been deepened by these tree beauties, but never is it so stirred as when one looks back through the dim centuries and the hope-laden years, down through the nights and days, the twilights and dawns of twenty centuries to a lonely, crude, rough tree, hewn hurriedly, shot into a hole in the ground, and a Saviour—my Saviour, the world's Saviour—nailed to its rough bark and its gaunt form. That tree of all trees is the wonder tree of the world.

With the *reverence* of a tree
Lifting up its heart to Thee
As the evening shadows fall,
Let me lift my heart in all
The adoration of a prayer
For Thy goodness everywhere.

With the *staunchness* of a tree
Let me live so close to Thee
I may feel when night winds blow,
With their whispers soft and low,
Thou art talking tenderly,
Like a father unto me.

With the *sureness* of a tree
Let me live my life in Thee;
Send my roots into Thy heart;
Of Thy very self a part;
Feel Thy strength pour into me
Like the currents of the sea.

With the *calmness* of a tree
Let me rest content with Thee.
In Thy rest may I find rest
As the sun sinks in the west;
In Thy wisdom may I know
It is best for me to grow.

CHAPTER II

STORMS OF THE BIBLE

THE black clouds hide the sky in hate; the waves in anger roll and beat their mighty bulk against the crouching, rocky shore. They reach their clutching arms to drag to death, and down, down into the depths they mercilessly draw and drown the helpless human victims of the storm.

The tempest beats and fear is on the sea. The seagulls hide their heads among the lofty cliffs, so far above the plunging waves that they rest in peace. The tempest beats and terror seizes on a mother's heart, for loved ones range that boiling, roaring sea. The child is filled with terror too, but finds a haven behind its mother's skirts, just as the seagull finds a haven of rest behind the sheltering rocks above the storm.

The tempest beats; the gulls are safe; the child has found a haven that drives its fear away; but the mother ever has and ever still shall face the storms of life and bear the brunt of suffering, and go alone down into valleys where no other one can go. But ever she may

"And a great and strong wind rent the mountains"

hide behind the robes of God, the Lover of all brave, true hearts who fight alone; and ever she may mount on wings of love to hide her soul amid the rocks of solitude where she may brood the breed that have Eternity forever in their hearts.

The far horizons of the deep are brooding promises of storms to be. A flash of lightning, far and low, and all pervasive, the lightning from a storm onrushing, moving like the mighty horsemen of the Apocalypse upon the ocean's vast expanse—horsemen winged to range the seas, who leave a path of pestilence along their wake.

Little house beside the sea;
Little mother fearfully;
Little child upon your breast;
Rest, O rest thy soul in me!
I will comfort; I will keep:
I will guide and I will guard
Sailors tossing on the deep;
Bring them safely back to thee!

One quotation that comes to mind is that wonderfully comforting thought from Mrs. Browning:

'And I smiled to think His greatness
Flowed around my incompleteness;
'Round my restlessness, His rest!
'And the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west.

Some of the truly great scenes of the Bible are scenes connected with storms. The fury of a storm always has subdued men of every age and every nation and every clime. There is something about a storm that makes man feel his helplessness and his littleness; it displays the strength of something outside of his control—the power that sweeps him away as if he too like a mighty ship at sea amid the turbulent typhoon were a chip of wood or a piece of straw.

There is never a year that somewhere in the Middle West we do not see the strange power of a storm manifested. I might draw innumerable illustrations from the past, but I speak only of a recent storm. It was in a Middle-West town. Eyewitnesses tell of various things that they saw, and all are fascinating. They tell how, as they stood on the platform of a little station, they saw black clouds suddenly sweep over the sky; saw a funnel-shaped cloud approaching the city, and then heard a strange roar coming upon them. They tell how this roar increased in volume as the light faded and that when its maximum was reached the entire town was in complete darkness.

They tell of what they found after the storm had passed. Huge box cars had been lifted up

by the storm as if they had been part of a child's toy train and carried for several blocks. A whole train, including the engine, was raised bodily from the track. They tell of houses being detached from their foundations, carried a mile, and deposited on another lot intact. Men and women sleeping in their beds were picked up and carried several blocks and dropped down without injury.

We are all familiar with the sense of awe and power that is manifested in a storm. One needs but to read a Hugo's story of the loosed cannon on the deck of the storm battered ship, or a Conrad's "The Typhoon," to catch the awe and terror of storms at sea. I have a childhood memory of a cyclone. I can remember the darkness that settled over the earth. I can remember my father quickly taking me up in his arms and running with me. I can remember a wild ride in a wagon and a hurried climbing down into a cyclone-cellar in Kansas. After that all I remember is the sense of danger and the ominous atmosphere that hovered over all of us. I can remember the darkness and the desolation.

And where is one who having experienced a storm at sea does not remember it, or one who has not been impressed with descriptions

of ocean storms in literature? Anyone who has passed through a real storm at sea will never forget it. He will never forget the rolling and creaking of the ship, whether that ship were large or small. It matters not to Old Ocean how large ships are, or how well they are built, or how strong they are. It is all the same to the raging sea. She claps her huge hands, raises her great wave arms aloft like a mighty giantess, and the great water walls close about the trembling vessel, fall upon it, chaos envelops it, and it is crushed as if it were an egg-shell. Or a storm might be likened to a madman bound with chains, who in his maniacal rage rises and breaks those chains as if they were made of straw, and shouts and mockingly laughs at those who think they would bind him. Or, again, the storm may display the irresistible force of the runaway street car which swept down a street in San Francisco. It ran into an automobile and crushed it aside as if it had been a plaything; then into another automobile it crashed, dealing with it similarly. Next it collided with a big army truck, crushing it, hurling it out of its way and killing several people. All of the frantic efforts of the motorman and the conductor to end its mad race were unavailing. It

swept on and on, smashing and crushing everything in its path, reducing its speed but the fraction of a second when it struck the big army truck. On it drove, plunging, crashing, dashing on its way. Nor did it end its wild journey until it had reached the foot of the hill, where, battered and bruised, it stopped of its own accord. So is a storm.

Man has boasted of the fact that he has conquered nature. He tells how he has harnessed the mountain streams, how he has conquered the air; how he has taken Niagara and made it the servant of his will, made it to run his street cars and light his cities. He boasts that he has in recent days even bridged the Atlantic with his airships and his dirigibles. He shouts with triumph over the fact that he has climbed more than thirty thousand feet into the air. He boasts of his big gun that shoots twenty-five miles upward—until its shell is almost outside of the earth's atmosphere. He boasts that he has photographed the sun and mapped the earth and surveyed the universe; and yet when a storm sweeps over the sea it plays with man's dirigibles and his planes as if they were thistledown; and it toys with his great Leviathans as if they were frail barks of shingled wood; and it laughs to itself at man's puny efforts to

harness nature. The storm is verily that "strong life that never knows harness."

But "men may come and men may go;" great engineers may come and great engineers may go. They build Panama Canals, they build railroads through mighty Alaska's ice-bound regions with marvelous conquering power of mind and brawn. One of the most marvelous miracles of construction that I have ever heard about is that of the building of the Alaska and Northern Railroad. It was built for forty miles inland from Fairbanks. It was built in a land where the weather never got higher than thirty degrees below zero and where the snow was always twenty-five to thirty feet deep. In the first forty miles there are sixty-seven bridges.

These same engineers even spanned a glacier—Miles Glacier, in the Copper River Railroad. The bridge that spanned this huge glacier had to be fifteen hundred feet long. There is a double turn in the river here and it flows between the faces of two glaciers, the Miles and the Childs Glaciers, both of them "living" glaciers, a sheer three hundred feet high in their mighty bulks. Each spring the engineers knew that thousands of icebergs would come battering down that river from the

glaciers and that their buttresses must withstand all of this. They had to erect a bridge with four spans.

Two years they worked under the most difficult of zero weather conditions, with blizzards blowing practically every minute of the time they toiled. Great concrete piers were driven fifty feet through the river bottom and anchored. To these were added a row of eighty-pound rails, set a foot apart all around and the whole structure bound with concrete, and above this great ice breakers were similarly constructed. They knew before they began the work that it would have to be done in the wintertime, because of the fact that as soon as the spring thaw began no false work could stand against the tremendous pressure of the icebergs that were continually breaking loose from the glaciers and sweeping down, borne forward by a twelve-mile-an-hour current.

Hence the task of constructing the piers had to be undertaken in the dead of winter. It was bitter cold. Snow storms were continuous. The piercing wind blew sixty to ninety miles an hour and hurled the fine particles of snow into the faces of the workmen like stones and needles.

When the last span was almost in place there came an appalling moment. The false work, which consisted of two thousand piles driven forty feet into the bottom of the river, moved suddenly fifteen inches. The ice—a solid sheet —was borne on a twelve-mile current. Into this ice the piles had been frozen solidly as a rock. The spring break up had begun. The ice cap lifted twenty feet above its winter bed and began to move.

The false work was fifteen inches out of plumb. Not to get it back meant that they could not connect with the farther shore. The engineers realized that at any minute the whole thing would go out. The fight that was before them they fully realized, but they started to work. As the man who described this says:

"The scene which follows was like a great moving picture. I wish that it might have been filmed for posterity to see.

"Steam from every available engine was turned on the ice from long pipes. Every man in camp was set to work to cut away that seven-foot thick layer of ice from the false work. At last this was done.

"During that awful arctic day the men worked eighteen hours without stopping. The river rose twenty-one feet. But all during this

time with the steam pipes working on the ice and the men cutting, the piles were kept free while one hundred cross-pieces were unbolted.

"Then the shifting of that false work back to plumb was begun. It was done inch by inch. At first it was one inch a day. Then it was two inches a day. Then three, and then four inches a day. The melting and chopping went on day and night during this time. One minute's relaxing of vigilance would have meant defeat. Anchorages were made up the river in the ice to hold the false structure in place while every man from the engineers down went to work to finish that last four hundred and fifty-foot span. Finally at midnight that great crowd of American workers and engineers had the satisfaction of seeing that great, last span settle down into its concrete bed to stay forever. The last bolt was driven at midnight. One hour later the river broke loose. In two seconds every pile of the false structure was broken off from its forty-foot bed and the whole thing was a mass of twisted wood and wire and steel. But the river had been vanquished. It had lost the fight by a single hour!"

I have seldom read or heard of such a triumph of man over the forces of nature, not

even in the story of the Panama Canal; but even as I read this story I am remembering that man's ships and his airplanes and his dirigibles are still but the playthings of the storms. Man may conquer ice and river and waterfall, and he may connect ocean with ocean by his mighty canal, severing a continent, and in that severing connecting a world, defying sands and leveling mountains; but when he faces a storm, with all his engineering genius and with all his mighty power, he is helpless—and he knows it.

And so it shall ever be with man. God lets him go just so far, and God wants him to go just so far. But God is still Master. There is only one instance on record when a storm was quieted, and that was on the Sea of Galilee, and there was a group of disciples in the boat with Jesus when the storm arose and the waves beat so high that it frightened those who were with him, and he arose and "rebuked the waves" and subdued the storm. And men, wondering, said, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

Old Testament Storms

The Old Testament writers used the storms as they used the birds and rivers and moun-

tains and deserts of the Bible to make vivid and clear and emphatic their teachings. Some of the most marvelous descriptions of storms that are written anywhere on earth are the descriptions of storms that are found in the drama of Job and in the Psalms.

Psalm 29 is perhaps the most perfect picture of a great storm that ever was written. One sees an Oriental tempest in all of its fury and all of its glory. You see it from the beginning to the end. You can see the black clouds and the lightning, and hear the roll of thunder. You can see the winds sweep through the forest of trees and watch them toppling before the mighty winds.

I was in the great redwood forests a while ago up in Humboldt County, California, and there I saw giant redwoods by the hundreds lying crossing each other, toppled over against each other like men lying on a battlefield, with their huge forms broken, twisted, defeated. I was horrified at the sight. They were such magnificent giants. They had stood for thousands of years. It did not seem any more possible for one of them to be blown over than that Yosemite's El Capitán should go down in a storm. But there they were—fallen giants.

I said, "What did it?"

The reply was, "The storms of last winter."

Then I remembered the storm in this great psalm, how it made the trees of Lebanon and Hermon shake and tremble. One even sees the poor animals of the forests terrorized and fleeing for safety, trembling for their young.

"Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.

"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters [storm]: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters.

"The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

"The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars [winds]; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

. . . . . .

"The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire [lightning].

"The voice of the Lord shaketh [thunder] the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

. . . . . .

"The voice of the Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King forever."

But even in this great and marvelous description the poet is not picturing the storm just for the sake of picturing a storm, but he is painting this vivid picture with a great purpose. It is to show that God reigns even above that mighty storm; that God is still Master even of this mighty force; that God is not fearful; that he is the Maker of the winds and the storms, and that they obey his will. Just as in the storm on the sea when he permitted his Son Jesus to show the world that he was Master of the storms, so all through this scene of a storm the voice of the psalmist cries that "The Voice of the Lord" was over it all. This sentence is repeated from time to time with an insistency that makes us know that David meant this storm description for no other reason than to make the great truth sink home to human hearts that this was God's storm.

As one writer says, the first two verses of this storm psalm and the last two verses are framed to inclose the picture of the storm. They speak of peace and quiet. It is a teaching that God will bring peace and quiet into human hearts after the storms of life have buffeted human lives about. And who that has known of this stirring, soul-satisfying and everlasting hope has not found it blessedly true?

Elijah's Storm and Its Teaching

We used to call it "Elijah's storm" when I was a boy. That was the way a class of Sunday-school boys thought of it. Somehow one teacher with an imagination had made that one great story and storm real to us. We could see the strong wind that rent the mountains. We could feel the earthquake that followed it. We could see the fire that swept over the land following the storm and earthquake. We often decided during the discussions that always followed this story that lightning which came during the storm had started the fire that Elijah saw from the mouth of the cave where he had sought shelter. Then when the San Francisco earthquake startled the world, with the awful fire that followed it, a boy's interpretation of this story would give him a right to believe that his biblical interpretation was right.

In fact, this whole section of Kings is full of storms. There are few varieties of storm that are left out. First, there is in the eighth chapter, toward the close, that fascinating contest to see if Baal or Jehovah will answer and the final culmination in "the sound of abundance of rain."

Then Elijah went to the top of Mount Carmel and watched the skies and saw the cloud that was "no larger than a man's hand" and which grew and grew in size until it covered the heavens, and "It came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain." But what more vivid description of storm succeeding storm—storm of the clouds, and then storm of the earth, and then storm of fire—than that seen by Elijah from the mouth of the cave?—"And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."

And what was the spiritual lesson that God was trying to teach through this vivid storm description, these startling figures of speech? God was trying to teach the great truth that ofttimes he has to subdue people with storms of anguish and suffering, and even of death, before they will be quiet in their souls and listen to him. There is no preacher who has not learned that folks are always more susceptible

to spiritual things after the storm of death has passed. It is not that they are scared. It is that they have stopped to think. This life is so full of a "number of things" that we do not pause to think. When we do we see things clearly, we get in touch with the infinite things and the infinite spiritual powers that are everywhere about us for our use.

All of this series of storm scenes was but to lead up to the "still small voice." When the architect of the Fine Arts Palace designed the colonnades he designed them with a purpose, and that purpose was to subdue the people before they entered the sacred halls of high art. They had been in the great palaces of machinery and along the avenues where popcorn and ice-cream cones were cried. They had watched the airship loop the loop. They were in no mood to see beautiful pictures, so he built the colonnades, like some ancient Grecian scene of beauty. Everybody had to pass through these colonnades to get to the pictures. Before they were through they were subdued. And so God used the storm to subdue Elijah before he spoke to him. When Elijah had been brought to his knees by the power and the wonder, then God spoke in a still small voice.

Yes, and God wanted to teach the great spiritual truth that he does not always speak through the tumbling, turbulent rivers and brooks, but often through the great easy-flowing, smooth-running, quietly going streams. God doesn't make much noise when he talks the eternal truths. It is nearly always in "the still small voice." But, whatever the lesson, it is perfectly clear that God was talking through a storm, and it is perfectly clear that Elijah, the great prophet, wanted to pass the truth on through that medium of speech to humanity everywhere.

Job's Storm

Job's storm was a whirlwind: "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind."

And those who know the great drama of Job know that no stage setting save that of a storm would have been complete after all this play of dialogue and words and great fundamental human passions and hopes and triumphs.

The great drama was drawing to its close. The climax was near. The acute human problems of Job were evidently impossible of solution. But still Job trusted in his God, and still he cried out, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

"The undying fire" was still smoldering in Job's breast. The arguments seemed to be all against him. He seemed defeated by his fault-finding friends. The preponderance of evidence seemed to weigh him down, but still he trusted. Then God's voice came to him in the whirlwind, and it spoke peace to his troubled soul.

Dr. Knudson says, "Job's problems were never solved; they just disappeared as God spoke out of the whirlwind." And that is often the way of life, and no doubt God meant to teach this in his great drama. Our problems are not always solved by us, or for us, but they disappear, which is just as well for us and for the world. The thing is pragmatic. It works. They disappear. The thing works. God makes our sorrows to dissipate. They are no more. He speaks to us out of the whirlwinds of our passions, our hates, our jealousies, our sufferings, our weaknesses, our fits of anger, our hopelessness, and somehow his voice makes everything right. It is like hearing the voice of love in the night.

A little girl imagines all sorts of goblins and bugaboos and strange monsters in the night hours. Her little imagination can people a sleeping-porch with more wild animals than the

Zoo of New York ever owned. She can crowd them all into a ten-foot sleeping porch. She can, with her imagination at night, see more beasts with big teeth and horns walk up the gang plank of half-sleep and in through an open window than walked into the ark before the flood. She can see more strange ghosts and weird creatures than a Kipling's or a Poe's imagination working at top speed for a lifetime can conjure up. Her little voice will cry out in terror, startling a sleeping daddy and mother near at hand, who are lying utterly unconscious of all the danger they are in, utterly unconscious of the hordes of dreadful beasts that are pouring into that sleeping porch, making the night hideous with their snarls and their growlings and their gnashing of teeth, until they hear a little terrified voice, crying, "Daddy, daddy! Mother, mother!"

The daddy sits up in bed a bit startled himself, and hears of the wild animals that are on the porch, and he speaks a quiet word of love and encouragement to a troubled little soul; and in a flash the daddy's voice drives all the wild animals away for good. They disappear as if his voice were a magic wand. They slink away to their lairs without harming the little girl; and all is peace and quiet, and a little child

dreams in peace and a little heart is stilled of its fear. Just a daddy's voice dissipates the fear and the troubles go away; and the problem is solved. And so out of the whirlwind God's voice spoke peace to Job's troubled soul.

Other Storm Figures

There is that beautiful, confidence-producing, cheering word of David the poet to us, and we hear him sing a new hope that God "maketh the storm a calm." And so hereafter, when our hearts are torn with the storm of anger, fear, jealousy, let God make of our storm a calm.

Proverbs warns us that "fear cometh as a storm."

And we know that it does. Sometimes fear will sweep over us like the chilly blasts before a winter storm and it will leave us helpless. Those of us who dealt with many people and many homes during the influenza epidemic will remember that fear made hundreds of people more susceptible to the disease that was stalking like a black specter in our midst. "Fear Kills More Folks Than Flu" was the theme of a sermon that the writer preached at that time, trying to show that the worst disease-breeding ground in the world was a soul filled with fear. God never meant for his children to be afraid.

"Let not your hearts be troubled" is a message that he sends us a hundred times in his Book.

But if fear does come "like a storm," he assures us through Isaiah that there is in Jehovah "A covert from the storm," and in another part of Isaiah he says it in other words—"a refuge from the storm."

Jehovah makes it clear in many a figure of speech through the vehicle of a storm that he will punish sin and sinning nations (particularly sinning nations) with a storm; that he will sweep them away as with a tempest. Typical of all of these many figures so used is that of Isaiah, chapter twenty-nine, verse six: "Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire." And whoever believes that this does not happen needs but to try the way of sin.

I know of a home now where sin has entered. And because I know that, I can make a prophecy which will be fulfilled within my own day that the one who is guilty of the sin will suffer grievously before the story has come to its last chapter. In the last chapter, like Tito of Romola, there will be a pair of bony fingers clutching at a sleek, fat throat and a lifeless

body and a lifeless, burned-out soul will lie on the banks of the Arno river to be the food of vultures. That's why God says that sinning men and sinning cities will look as if a storm of earthquake and fire has swept over them. This figure is used frequently, but it is everlastingly true.

Did you see San Francisco after the fire and earthquake? Did you see Galveston after the tidal wave? Did you see Chicago after the fire? Did you see Baltimore after the great fire? Did you see Constantinople after fire had swept it almost from the face of the earth? Did you see France after the war? That's what a human soul looks like after sin has burned its soul away. Sin leaves a human being looking like the burned, dried, charred flesh of one who has met death in a flame of fire. That's what sin does to a soul and to a nation.

But in the same book of Isaiah, in the twenty-fifth chapter, God also promises his nation and his people and every human soul that will come to him that he will be a stronghold to them: "For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."

Photo by William L. Stidger

A sentinel pine on Mount Taishan, in China; said to be the oldest worshiping place on earth

CHAPTER III

THE MOUNTAINS OF THE BIBLE

NO wonder that the writers of the Bible —and, indeed, writers the world over and the centuries through—have used the mountains as some of their most telling and striking figures of speech.

What thing about us is so stable, so reliable, so eternal as the mountains, the "mothers of rivers"? The similes that are commonly used by preachers and writers with mountains as the comparison are enough to fill a page of this chapter, and every one of them will be found in the Bible. They are:

As high as the mountains.
As majestic as the mountains.
As staunch as the mountains.
As reliable as the mountains.
As everlasting as the mountains.
As stable as the mountains.
As true as the mountains.
As near to God as the mountains.
As godlike as the mountains.
As abundant as the mountains.

As rugged as the mountains.
As steep as the mountains.
As fertile as the mountains.
As friendly as the mountains.
As life-giving as the mountains.
As faithful as the mountains.

And so it goes. Figures of speech to teach great spiritual truths with the mountains as backgrounds are common in the Bible; common in the sense of occurring frequently, but wonderfully uncommon in their beauty and depth of meaning.

"The lonely sunsets flare forlorn
Down valleys dreadly desolate;
The mighty mountains soar in scorn,
As still as death, as stern as fate!

"The lonely sunsets flame and die;
The giant valleys gulp the night;
The monster mountains scrape the sky;
The eager stars are diamond bright."
(*The Spell of the Yukon.*)

What a thrilling sight it is to see God put the mountains to sleep at night! Watch him spread, first, a glorious crimson blanket over them, and then over this crimson blanket a purple robe as befits the slumbers of a king. Then often, when God thinks the mountains will be too chilly, in between the royal robe of

purple and the crimson blanket he slips a lighter robe of pink and salmon color. Then when he has the little hills, and the great old pines, and the tiny bushes, and the flowers and grasses, and the birds in their nests, and the myriad baby leaves tucked in for the night, God sings them to sleep with his running streams and his winds whispering in the leaves, and soughing through the valleys. And as you watch this gentle putting of the mountains to sleep, you cannot tell which is the more beautiful, tenderness of the God of the mountains and of the little hills or the twilight hills themselves. It is a wonderful privilege to watch the mountains put to bed at twilight.

And then to see God awaken the mountains is no small privilege. First he sends the winds before the dawn and with them the heralds of faint light that tell of the coming of the groom of the morning. It is as though God would awaken the mountains as gently as he put them to sleep. Nature is gentle at times. It is as a mother who awakens her child. She does not go into the room yelling and clamoring, and shouting to awaken the child. She does not discharge a gun nor drop a book. She does not want to awaken it too abruptly. She is sweetly gentle about it, and whispers its name like a

morning prayer: "Betty—Betty—Baby dear—has mother got a baby here?" And so God awakens the mountains and the grasses and the little hills—so gently: first, the winds before the dawn—and how softly they blow!—so softly that were you awake you could barely feel them on your cheeks. But it is a stirring wind; this wind before the dawn, and the mountain begins to awake to consciousness. Then God sends with sudden wondrous harmony a chorus of bird songs, louder than the wind before the dawn, and with it a soft mantle of light across the eastern hills. He has now touched the cheeks of the sleeping mountains and is shaking his children gently. The trees begin to sway in the wind, and a pale light slips in through the windows of the sky.

And now, quietly, unobtrusively—almost before we know it, the dawn has come, and the bird chorus has swelled to fullest volume. The winds are sweeping through the pines, the mountains are shouting with joy at a new day, and God is glad. His children are awake and ready to be fed, and ready for work, and ready for play.

Poets and artists and prophets have always loved the mountains. Jesus Christ, the greatest Poet and Artist and Prophet of all times, found

a place to rest and pray high up on the mountains of Judæa.

Bret Harte was a lover of his Rocky Mountains and Joaquin Miller sings his "Songs of the Sierras" with a love and charm that makes them our mountains also. Whittier loved the White Mountains of New England, while Irving lived among and immortalized the rolling mountain side of the beautiful Selkirks. Angelo saw his first visions of marble glories as he gloried in the far-off beauties of the majestic Alps, and Robert Service has sung us the songs of Alaskan peaks and glaciers. John Muir makes us live with him on old White Shasta's snow-blanketed slopes, or roam with him Yosemite's precipitous sides, or scale her El Capitán and her Half Domes, or journey with him up Ranier's ice-bound pathways. And we of lesser fame have our mountains and love them.

I wandered as a boy over the Allegheny Mountains, and sang as a boy that song which thrills all men born in that State whose motto is "Mountaineers are always free," the beautiful melody of "Those West Virginia Hills." But in recent years mine has been the glory of having as boon companion the Sierras; mine has been the glory of living within sight and

sound of Mount Shasta, "The noblest Roman of them all." I have watched Mount Shasta belch its streams of crystal snow-born water out across the valleys of California. I have heard its thundering avalanches and have watched the slow creeping of its glaciers. I have seen it fling its snow-banners to the winds of winter and I have seen it through the shadows of nighttime. I have watched a crimson sunset further glorify its immaculate beauty, and I have seen storm clouds scowling about its ever-dominant head. I have watched it go to sleep at night and awaken in the morning.

The world over men turn their eyes and hearts mountainward. One who has traveled over the Orient will remember a common sight: that of the inevitable "pilgrim" on his way, across a whole nation, by foot, begging his living, because of a vow he has made that he will ascend Fujiyama's beauteous and imposing peak.

Fujiyama looms up in the spiritual life of the Japanese just as it rises in its snow-crowned symmetry above the otherwise level stretches of Japan. To the Japanese this great mountain is a thing to revere, a thing to pray to, a thing to bow down before, a thing to worship. And

even to the casual traveler Fujiyama, rising, as it does, from a level expanse, fills one with awe and wonderment.

And just as Fujiyama stands out as one of the great shrines of the Orient so does old Mount Taishan, China. Here for thirty centuries men have been worshiping. Here Confucius himself climbed six thousand steps to Taishan's mile-high crest where the quaint temples and towers and monoliths rear their heads and send the music of their innumerable bells tinkling in the winds.

Here six thousand granite steps have been engineered, so far back in the dim past that the Chinese cannot tell who performed this gigantic task. Up these six thousand granite steps hundreds of thousands of pilgrims every year, from all over the great nation, make their way with devout hearts, to pay their vows made during the years. Mothers come here who have made a vow that if they come safely through the voyage of birth, they will climb Taishan. Business men who have prospered during the year climb Taishan to pay their vows of gratitude. From its sacred summit one may sight the far off ocean beauty with the level plains lying in grace and beauty between. Taishan is called "the oldest worshiping place

on earth." One has a sense of reverence as he stands on its wind-swept summit. For long before Moses shook the bondage of Egypt from his soul, centuries before Isaiah lived and dreamed and died; before Christ was awaited; before Europe had a civilzation at all; before America saw its first Indians, men were worshiping on Taishan's peaks.

"I have stood in some mighty mouthed hollow
Plumb full of hush to the brim;
I have watched the big husky sun wallow
In crimson and gold, and grow dim,
Till the moon set the pearly peaks gleaming
And the stars tumbled out neck and crop,
And I thought that I surely was dreaming
With the peace of the world piled on top."

(*The Spell of the Yukon.*)

And not only do the poets, painters, prophets and preachers outside the sacred precincts of the Bible love the mountains and use them as mediums of thought conveyance, but the Book itself is full of mountains.

Mountains of the Bible

There are three scientific explanations for the origin of mountains, and we find all three of these explanations accounting for the mountains in biblical lands as well as in our own great country. The first is mountains by eleva-

tion; the second is mountains by erosion; the third is mountains by accumulation. Let us consider first the theory of origin by *elevation:* Many mountains and many mountain ranges owe their origin to upheavals from beneath that have come during the geological periods, when the forces of underworld nature were, like a huge elephant humping its coast-long back, bulging the surface of the earth high into the air. Thus came our Rocky Mountains and our high Sierras; and if you want a beautiful scientific narrative of how this came about, with a poetic background, read Edwin Markham's California the Wonderful. In addition to our Western mountains are the Scandinavian and Grampian ranges, the ranges of North Wales, those of Bavaria, and the biblical Sinaitic group beween the Gulfs of Suez and Akaba. The Alps and the Pyrenees were also a part of the world's upheaval.

The second classification is origin by *erosion.* Many mountains which stand off by themselves, and mountain ranges running for thousands of miles owe their origin to the erosion of the lands around them. This is true of our own ranges of the Colorado in North America, where by rains and the chisel of the Colorado River not only a great mountain range was cut

out and the plateaus leveled, but a beautiful Grand Canyon was left over in the making. A range called the Jura in Switzerland came about in this way, as did a range in South Wales.

The mountains in biblical lands—Upper Egypt, Edom, Moab, southern Judea—the Lebanon range, with the dome-like Mount Hermon, which every winter hoards its snows to pour into beautiful Galilee—all owe their origin to erosion of the tablelands about them, leaving these ranges and single lone mountains standing out by themselves. Thus came Mount Hor where Aaron died.

The third and last theory is that of mountains by *accumulation*. What a marvelous story the story of accumulation tells! It might be called the snowball method. Thousands of cities have literally been buried by accumulation. In some places we see four and five cities on top of each other, which through the succeeding centuries have been buried by accumulation. It has seemed almost impossible, but we who live close neighbors to sand dunes know that it is entirely within reason. If you don't believe it, go out on the dunes and see how in one sand storm a fence and a house will be buried almost overnight.

But accumulative mountains usually come by the eruption of volcanoes, either out of the sea or on the land. These belching holes throw out millions of tons of debris, which through the æons piles itself up into a mighty mountain.

The Auvergnes in Central France were formed in this manner; Vesuvius and Etna, two great isolated mountains, were formed in this accumulative manner.

In the region east of the Upper Jordan, called in the New Testament Trachonitis, there are several extinct volcanic cones rising above the surface of the plains. Still further east in Bashan a grand range of volcanic mountains dominates this wild land. In Central Arabia is another range thus formed. Not far from the famous Mohammedan Mecca and Medina are such mountains, although they were probably thrown up even before the event of man and the story of the flood.

Biblical References to Mountains

"A god's mountain," indicating greatness or majesty—so Mount Horeb and Sinai were called, not only because they were dignified, but also because they had biblical chapters of the great drama of religion enacted on their high-flung peaks that have made them memorable.

Both "The Mount of the Congregation" and "The Mount of Assembling" refer to the dwelling place of the gods and to places where the Israelites met to worship.

Among the figures of speech which appear in the Bible in reference to mountains are those in which the mountains are said to "cover the guilty from God's face," to "leap in praise of Jehovah," to "witness his dealings with his people." They also are referred to as hiding places, hunting and grazing grounds for cattle and sheep, and as beacon stations.

Some of the most memorable and far-reaching scenes of the Bible were enacted on mountains. Mount Moriah, a single and lonely elevated summit among the hills of Palestine was the scene of Abraham's intended sacrifice of his son. Here the knife was lifted; here the prayer was uttered; here a father heart was tested supremely, and here a lover of God triumphed. Mount Sinai is a name to conjure with in biblical history and great scenes and gigantic moments. Mount Hor, the scene of Aaron's death, shall be forever sacred to the lover of Holy Writ. The Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem the Golden, memorable for many incidents of the great story of Christ (almost as significant an out-of-doors spot as

the shores of blue Galilee), is most memorable because it was from this mountain and down its sides that Jesus walked on the morning of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

The mount of transfiguration is in dispute as to its exact location. Most authorities, however, agree that it was on Mount Hermon. What more appropriate spot for this last great scene? There it stands overlooking the Lake of Galilee, whose level, as we have seen, each spring is raised by pouring its melting snows into the basin. What more appropriate spot for this great event than that peak, nine thousand feet high, which could easily have been reached in less than a week from Cæsarea Philippi? The greatest enunciations, including the Beatitudes, were given on mountains. "Mountain-top experiences" has come to be a part of the very religious phraseology of our belief.

Truths Taught by the Mountains

Just as has been the case in every outstanding feature of natural life, the writers of the Bible used the mountains to teach their great truths. They recognized the fact first, that *mountains inspire worship*. Fuji-san, the great mountain of Japan, which has been mentioned,

is the worshiping place of the entire Japanese empire. No loyal Japanese ever passes that sacred mass of mountain greatness without making his reverent obeisance. One Christmas Eve, with a group of Methodists I was at Angel Island, San Francisco. We were trying to make a group of Japanese immigrants, which included a group of Geisha girls, happy on that evening of all evenings. We showed them several reels of motion pictures, but got no response from them. They were like little brown imitations of the Sphinx, as far as any joy on their faces showed. Then we showed on the screen a picture of Fuji. There was instant response. Little peals of joyous laughter came from those Geisha girls. There was a sudden commotion, and much to our surprise in a twinkling they were bowing to their knees before that great mountain.

On the summit of Shasta's peak there is a little protected box in which some reverent soul has placed a Bible, and here those who worship God read a bit of his book, and pray on that great summit.

Bishop Quayle says that they "suggest eternity" and he further adds, "Compared with Mount Tacoma, the immortal Sphinx is but a child in years."

Mountains are so high that they seem naturally to lift us nearer to God, and they also take us further away from the sordidness of the world, away from the "mud and scum of things," up into the clean air, and the purity and sweetness where stars shine and God is.

Mountains also suggest steadfastness. In the midst of this turbulent age, with the world full of restlessness and uneasiness, it is good to look unto the hills.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills:[1] from whence cometh my help."

The mountains seem to be about the only stable, steadfast things on earth, and they give us new strength when we live in their midst during these restless years.

I lived within sight of Mount Tamalpais for three years in San Francisco. I saw it the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. I watched the golden glory of the Golden Gate flood its brown sides, and watched the white fog of a new morning bathe its rugged outlines.

I have seen great floods of fog pour in from off the Pacific Ocean and completely hide its rugged form, but I have never at any time doubted that, when the fog rolled away or was

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[1] Revised Version, "mountains."

dissipated by the sun, my old faithful friend still would be there. It always was. It was steadfast.

San Francisco was shaken to dust by the great earthquake and then the dust went up in ashes, but old Tamalpais was undisturbed by that terrible calamity. There it stood faithful, steadfast, as a true friend stands by one when trouble comes. Such are unmoved.

So may our friends be; so may our ideals be; so may our hope in eternity be; so may our faith in God be; so may our belief in good and in Jesus Christ be; so may our loyalty to the church be, and our love for our home and our loved ones; so may our belief in things high and holy; so may the staunchness of our lives be; as steadfast and as faithful as the mountains.

They suggest many other things: they suggest abundance, shelter; they are the "mothers of rivers"; they are the hope of the valleys and of humanity; they are the beacon lights of the world; they are the guideposts of the mariners coming in from sea, as Miller says; they are the test of all faith; but, more than all other things, they suggest steadfastness and worship. These two stand out like two great twin peaks themselves in a glorious range of mountains, these two and none other; these two, snow-

crowned and gleaming in the sunlight of eternity: *worship* and *steadfastness.*

And at last the hope of the world gleams from a mountain top, where Calvary's cross arises with its form of hope through the centuries. I have seen Mount Shasta all day long through the distance and near at hand, and it has been a glorious sight. I have seen Mount McGregor, that last resting place of General Grant, and one Sunday morning I climbed to its peak, and standing on the place where Grant used to stand to look out over the valley of the beautiful Hudson, we took out our Book of books and read the Sermon on the Mount, and there we worshiped God. We had climbed to the top of Mount McGregor, and in that climb we had climbed nearer to God.

But, higher than all of these, more beautiful, more crowned with the light of a great hope, more steadfast, from whose breast flow more streams of mercy and healing than flow from Shasta; although it is only a mere hill, growing sweeter and sweeter each day, growing higher and mightier as the centuries roll on, more majestic, more filled with an eternal hope, is Mount Calvary, on whose lonely top still stands in the heart of the world the lonely cross of Jesus.

CHAPTER IV

RIVERS OF THE BIBLE

SINCE the mountains are said to be the "mothers of rivers," it is well to consider in this chapter the rivers of the Bible and the great spiritual lessons that the biblical writers intended to teach by reference to them. Some one has said that all great writers have been influenced by three things, namely, the epoch in which they lived, their race, and their physical surroundings; and certainly among the physical surroundings of the Bible the rivers played no small part. Nearly every writer at some time tries to picture God as speaking through a river, as does Isaiah when he says, "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream" (Isa. 66. 12). This great figure of speech that Isaiah uses in trying to impress the people with whom he is speaking is a natural figure of speech. If there is any one thing that to me expresses a sense of quiet and peace, it is a great, broad river flowing serenely between hills and meadows to its inevitable destination, the ocean.

Photo by H. Hugo

"He leadeth me beside the still waters"

There is nothing uncertain about a river. It *knows* what it is about, and it *knows* where it is going. It has been there before. It has been there almost as often as a motorman has been over the route that he has been running for years. The drops of water that go to make up this great, broad river have traveled this route from the beginning of time. Blessed is the man who *knows* where he is going, in whom is no uncertainty.

It is a contented body, a river. It does not allow itself to become restless and uncertain and disturbed and worried and flustrated. It goes serenely on, no matter what happens. If a dam gets in its way it quietly seeks an outlet along some other route. If a bowlder thrusts itself up to impede the progress of a river, that river calmly and without much ado or fret, laughs to itself—and some say that the splashing is the way a river has of laughing—and slips serenely around that bowlder on its blessed and certain way.

Happy are the men and women who have learned the lesson of calmness in *their* lives; who will not allow themselves to be frustrated, who will not permit their souls to be disturbed and perturbed about anything; who, when obstacles arise in life, go around or through

those obstacles and, without much ado, continue on their journey—smiling.

Now, an ocean is not a thing of peace. I do not think many writers use the ocean as a figure of peace. It is too restless for that. It is always restless and unsatisfied. It is like a great angry Numidian lion imprisoned in a cage. It roars and growls, and paws against the rugged rock and mountain bars of its prison, for the ocean is in prison. True enough its prison is a great prison. It is the earth. But it is a big ocean and, no matter how big a prison is, if the prisoner's body scrapes the sides of that prison it is too small a prison and the prisoner will fight against its bars. Did you ever stand beside the cage of a great angry lion, with the question in your mind as to what would happen were it to break through the bars? Did you ever stand beside the shores of the great ocean with the angry sea roaring and dashing itself against the shore line bars, and rocks and cliffs, as though striving to be released? If you have stood on such a shore, you know into what a rage the waves may lash themselves.

And even on a day that is comparatively calm this great old ocean is a restless animal. It cannot be quiet. It is like a polar bear. Not

impetuous, but restlessly pacing up and down in its cage, coming and going, never ceasing, ever walking without a roar of complaint, but walking, walking, walking. It is unceasingly restless.

But a river is a thing of peace. It may be turbulent in places, and for a few moments, as the mountains try to shut it into a narrow gorge. Then it becomes restless, but only for a minute, and just beyond you will find it moving smoothly in the sunlight of wide fields, with a great placidity that is most comforting.

The brook and the creek and the smaller mountain streams may shout and laugh and romp and play like children let loose from school. There is no quiet in them; they are all turbulency and noise and romping, and running, dodging around rocks for the mere fun of dodging. This brook, tumbling down a mountainside is the childhood of the river, before it has grown up into quieter, more sedate, more dignified ways. The brook is the childhood of the river—that's all; and childhood is always turbulent if it is natural.

But a river is calm; it is in repose; it is at peace with the world and with itself. Therefore Isaiah's figure is particularly striking: "I will extend peace to her like a river."

Born and raised on the Ohio River, one of America's most beautiful streams, I feel that I too, if I had been writing the book of Isaiah, would have used a figure very much like his "peace like a river." I have seen the Ohio in moods of anger and hate and fury, but that only for a short period in the springtime. Two thirds of the year it is a great, broad, peaceful stream. I have watched it flowing between age-old hills and far-stretching meadows, with cattle standing in its shallow waters near the shore, and a great peace on land and hill and river. I have seen it on a midsummer afternoon, with the heat shimmering on its surface —at peace. I have seen it at night with a great moon and myriad stars shimmering through the willows, and the water lapping against the willow branches—at peace. I have floated on its broad breast when a great impenetrable bank of fog lay over its surface in the early morning, and it was at peace with the world. I have seen it by twilight with the sun dropping behind the Ohio hills, and peace was there.

I have followed the beautiful Hudson from its source to its mighty mouth. I have wandered along its placid shores up yonder where Burgoyne surrendered at Schuylerville. I have ridden its broad breast from Albany to

New York, along its historic ways, between its magnificent Palisades, within sight of its rolling mountains which we call the Catskills, where memories of Rip Van Winkle, Sleepy Hollow and the great gray walls of West Point stand out. But, above all, there is a memory, and a beautifully comforting and placid memory it is, of sweet peace hovering over that river.

I shall never be thrilled again as I was thrilled at my first sight of the broad Mississippi, that river about which lingers the essence of the romance of history, that river upon whose bosom Mark Twain piloted great, broad steamers, that river down which La Salle floated, that river the dominant characteristic of which is peace.

The great train sped along the beautiful Delaware one Sunday morning as a spring rain poured down with pattering insistency upon its quietly flowing surface, singing as it fell a song of everlasting peace.

I have stood by that great twenty-foot spring of ice-cold crystal snow-water which, after melting on old Mount Shasta, finds its way by an underground passage until it bursts out of the earth as the source of the Sacramento River. From thence I have followed the turbu-

lent, tumbling waters of this great California river, through the wide valley that it makes to "blossom as the rose" down to its mouth.

Yonder in France I have lived and I have swum in the green waters of the historic Marne, the Meuse, and the Loire. Each of these rivers, like the Somme, is known to history as a body of water on which some of the bloodiest battles of all history have been fought, but those who know them, and who have lived beside them, even in war times, know them for quiet, softly flowing streams, the motion of which is scarcely perceptible at times, flowing through green fields and under the white bridges and along the white highways of beautiful France. And no sight is more peaceful than the valleys of these great French rivers in spring, when a million red poppies are blowing in the winds and a dozen great chateaux loom against white clouds on the opposite hillside. No wonder that Jeanne d'Arc dreamed a dream and caught her vision as she stood in "The Valley of Vision" at Domremy overlooking the Meuse.

I have had for my friends the beautiful, quietly flowing Merrimac, the Willamette, the Missouri, the Monongahela, the Allegheny, the Rio Grande, the Columbia, the Yangtse of

China, the Sambas of Borneo, the Pasig of Luzon, the winding Saigon of French Indo-China, and the great, broad breasts of the rivers of the ocean, and I have never had any feeling other than that of a great sense of peace in their presence. "I will extend peace to her like a river."

Rivers of Literature and History

Somehow rivers have been not only closely linked with biblical history and literature, but they also have been closely linked with secular literature and history.

One never thinks of Tennyson that he does not think of the Thames and Hallam; these two great comrades of "In Memoriam" floating down its surface. One does not think of the Merrimac that the faces of Whittier, Longfellow, and Thoreau do not come flitting peacefully before one's memory screen. One never thinks of the Charles that he cannot see Longfellow and hear the sad tones of "The Bridge," when

> ". . . only the sorrow of others
> Throws its shadow over me."

One cannot refer to the Rhine and the Rhone without a myriad scenes—and most

significant scenes—of history come thronging before him. The Dnieper and the Danube bring back similar memories. The Nile, with its annual overflow, if it could tell its story of the Pharaohs and its subsequent history down through the Great War, would tell a thrilling tale.

It was from the Nile that the figure of speech suggested in the quotation used in the beginning of this chapter came. It was a most natural thing for the Hebrew writers who were familiar with the Nile to talk of a person or a nation, which worshiped Jehovah, to have "Peace like a river and glory of the nations like an overflowing stream."

Rivers of the Bible and Lessons Taught

A figure of speech referring to rivers is used one hundred and twenty times in the Old Testament. In the New Testament there are seven references.

The rivers mentioned by name in the Old Testament are the Tigris, the Nile, the Euphrates, the River of Eden, the Gozan, and the Cush. The great river of the New Testament, of course, is the Jordan.

The idea of a river is used in the Bible to fix boundaries, for bathing, for fishing, as a means

of defense, as a place of prayer, as a highway for navigation, and for irrigation—for every single one of which purposes it also is used to this day by some people. We bound our States by rivers, we erect our bathing pavilions in them, and the Columbia River renders unto us each year its harvest of beautiful, red-fleshed salmon. The Marne has been used for centuries of European history as a place of defense, just as the Rhone and a hundred other rivers. As a place of prayer we do not use rivers so often, but many of us have seen most sacred baptismal services held on the banks of a modern river. And even as a "highway for navigation" since the war rivers have come into more common use. As a means of irrigation those of us in the great West have seen millions of acres of arid, acrid desert land reclaimed through the utilization of our rivers.

Just as the Lake of Galilee is made most precious to the Christian heart because it is so pregnant with memories of Christ, so the River Jordan is just as dear to us because along its winding shores so many great scenes in the life of our Master took place.

I have so often thought of how close he clung to this river. He never got very far away from it. He was baptized and acknowledged as his

Father's Son on its banks, and from its waters he went into the wilderness to fast and pray. Mount Hermon and the River Jordan and the Lake of Galilee are close together. They are linked to each other by the Jordan, the mountain and the sea, and they are even more closely linked by memories of Christ. Somehow the Jordan runs like a silver stream through the green meadows of the New Testament.

Some of the great figures of speech of the Bible center about rivers. The Psalms from beginning to end seem to echo the sweet music of flowing streams, and the greatest psalm of all—the twenty-third—has as its setting a river. "Beside still waters" is a sweet phrase, and it suggests a picture of a shepherd and his sheep and the Master and green fields that will never die.

And we are reminded by the writers of the Bible that the nation or the human being who has God for Father and Christ for Brother, that that nation and that individual has an undisturbed life, a life that has in it "peace like a river."

The Christian life is an undisturbed life. Wars and rumors of war may come; death, pain, calamity, suffering, loss; but the Christian does not fret, for the Christian knows down

deep in his heart of hearts that "All things work together for good to them that love God."

Also the Christian's destination is as inevitable as that of a river. This gives him a sense of peace that is unshakable. A river knows where it is going. It may be swerved for a time, but it finally gets back and is on with its journey. You cannot thwart it. You cannot discourage it. It *knows* that it will find its goal, which is the ocean, just as the Christian *knows* that he will find his Father.

Not as old pessimist, Omar, would say:

"Into this Universe, and *Why* not Knowing,
Nor *Whence,* like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the waste,
I know not *Whither,* willy-nilly blowing."

But as Christ has made possible:

Into this Universe, and . . . *Now* knowing
And *Thence* like water, ever onward flowing
Toward the Ocean's boundless depth of Love;
Broader, swifter, deeper Godward Going!

CHAPTER V

THE BIBLE AND THE SEA

THE influence of the sea on the literature of the world cannot be overstated: no great literature, either ancient or modern, but that has, within its pages, the restlessness, the rolling wonder, the far thunder, and the near whispering of the sea. Men talk to and of the sea as they would talk of a friend or an enemy. Men express hate, love, envy, anger, jealousy, death, storm, peace, sorrow, avarice, stoicism, hysteria, surprise, suffering, weariness, calmness, turbulency—indeed, every human emotion—in figures of speech taken from the sea.

Recently I heard a humble man, who was not an orator, but who had become strangely articulate because of his interest in the present world unrest, express the present crisis, as naturally as a child breathes, in a tremendous figure of speech taken from the sea that he knows so well. He said: "I was walking down along the Pacific Ocean a week ago near Monterey. There had been a terrific storm for

Photo by H. Hugo

"Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed"

a week, but the storm was over and the sun was shining, and it was as glorious a morning as I have ever seen. But, much to my surprise, when I got down along the shore, in spite of the singing of the birds, the sunshine and the white clouds in the sky, the peaceful playing of little children, and smoke curling lazily from homes along the shore, the sea was still restless and turbulent and uneasy. It was the aftermath of the storm." And so it is with our present unrest in the world. It is an aftermath of the great World-War storm. The storm has passed, but the ocean of life is still restless. The waves still run high. There is still danger. But the oil of human kindness, the oil of the brotherhood of justice, of Jesus Christ, will calm even that restlessness in time.

He was a comparatively ignorant, uneducated man, and yet he was speaking classical language. He was speaking great literature. He had become articulate unconsciously, and when he spoke the great thought that was in him he used the simple, natural figures of speech that came from the sea he knows so well. So it has been down through the ages. So it will ever and should ever be. And the wonderful Bible is full of figures of speech taken from the sea.

It thrills one to catch these figures. One sees great leviathans swimming through the pages of the Book of books; one hears great storms thundering; one sees humble men fishing; one sees a lonely Christ walking along the white sands of the sea. One feels at home in the Bible because one knows the sea.

(I heard a child who, being a preacher's daughter, knew what moving meant, say, "Daddy, if we have to move let's get us an ocean or a lake to live by.")

I heard a man say once, "I refuse to live any place where I cannot companion with a sea." And I have watched that man's career in the church, and he has never lost the ambition. Once I saw him living and serving his church down on Cape Cod, and again I saw him serving his church out beside the Golden Gate overlooking the Pacific. The last time I saw him he was in Manila on the far shores of the Pacific. I have often wondered whether or not he deliberately shapes his life so that he may still "companion with a sea," as he told me one day. All I know is that he seems to gravitate as naturally toward a sea as a flower turns its face to the great sun.

And the Bible is full and running over with seas. Sure enough, all of them are not seas in

the way that we think of seas, for that word was used, as we shall see, interchangeably, to mean a lake, a great river, or an ocean. But of one thing we are certain, and that is that the biblical writers were familiar with the Mediterranean. And of another thing we are sure: that the very first biblical scenes open on a world that is nothing but sea; and that the very ending of the Book is regnant with the setting of a sea in the midst of which was Patmos, the Island of Patmos, the Island of Visions. So the Bible is, as it were, framed in a framework of seas.

There is hardly a book in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, that does not have several references to the sea. The statistics of these references are interesting. Exodus and the Psalms seem to have the greatest number of such references; the former having the lead with thirty-two, and the latter with thirty references. Isaiah has twenty-seven references to the sea. In the New Testament, Revelation has twenty-six references and Matthew eighteen. The New Testament itself has, all told, close to one hundred references to the sea in its figures of speech.

The first inquiry that comes to the Bible reader is, What seas did the biblical writers

actually know? Or did they mean by the expression "sea" just an average lake, and a comparatively small one at that, such as the Lake of Galilee?

We see many references in the Bible to snow, and we wonder where the Bible writers found their references to snow. Then we discover that the mountains of Galilee were covered with snow, and that when the snow melted in the spring from Mount Hermon, the waters of Galilee were raised several inches.

We remember something of the thrill that we had in the story of the children of Israel, who were led through the Red Sea, and of the east wind that swept the waves back and then later drowned Pharaoh's men in the midst of the sea.

It is an established scientific truth that the writers of the Old and the New Testaments were familiar with several of what they called "seas." One was, of course, the Red Sea. Then there were the Mediterranean Sea (to which there are references in Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), the Dead Sea, and the Sea of Galilee.

In addition to these references biblical writers also frequently referred to the Nile and the Euphrates as "seas."

The Mediterranean being the limit of the western boundaries of Palestine, made the Old Testament writers familiar with the sea, and consequently we find them using many figures of speech to carry their spiritual lessons to those to whom they were speaking and to succeeding generations.

In addition to having direct knowledge of these four seas and the two rivers which I have mentioned, there were figurative references to the sea made by biblical writers that are fascinating in their aptness, their bigness, and their force.

If there was any one thing more than any other thing that was characteristic of the Hebrew writer it was his bigness of thought. He never thought in terms of brooks if he could get a river; in terms of hills if he could get a mountain; in terms of ponds if he could get a sea to express what he wanted to say. He dreamed big dreams of his God; he had great thoughts, and he must needs choose from the biggest material thing his Jehovah had produced to carry his thought to people.

His figurative references were to the "deeps," which meant to him the primeval sea from whence all came. His second reference was to the ocean stream and subterranean

waters; his third, to any great quantity of water; his fourth, to the deep places of the underworld, the abode of the dead.

The images of the sea were used in order to teach the lessons of man's grief, which is "as the unquiet sea"; the lesson of the doubtful man, which is as "the waves tossed by the wind"; the wicked men, who are "as raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame."

Great Moments of the Book and the Sea

The first scenes which we have in the Bible are ones in which the sea covered the face of the earth, and God's spirit "hovered upon the face of the waters" or "was brooding upon the face of the waters." "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."

This is a weird and wonderful scene. Some of us have seen it dramatized in "The Creation" and we have felt the dense darkness of the chaos that was upon the earth. We have felt the wash of ceaseless waves; we have felt and heard the thunder of ceaseless surf; we have felt and known the impenetrable darkness that was upon the face of the earth until God divided the waters from the land.

Then we have thrilled, as I have said, to the story of the Red Sea and the children of Israel fleeing from their slavery; with those dramatic incidents of the pause on the banks of the Red Sea; the fears in the hearts of those who were being led; the doubtings of leadership; the final entry into the paths of the sea wherein the winds swept the waters back; the dramatic safe passage of God's children and the final annihilation of Pharaoh's army when the winds turned and swept the waters of the sea over them. We never had heard quite such a thrilling story as that until we read Jules Verne and Wells in later years. We never had read such a thrilling story as that until in later years we knew of tidal waves such as the Galveston wave, and tidal waves caused by earthquake upheavals in the midst of the sea, and buried continents and other sea vagaries.

Then, when we read that marvelous thirty-eighth chapter of Job, we were thrilled with its description of the seas. We heard the thunder of Jehovah's voice as Job listened:

"Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set

bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"

What a tremendously challenging series of questions that is! How it thrills and stirs and subdues and humbles one in the face of the God of the seas and oceans!

Then we remembered a certain story of Jonah and the whale's stomach. It was a story of the sea. It was a story which had a figurative meaning. It was a story in which the writer was trying to show how Israel, God's people, was swallowed up in the stomach of the Babylonians.

And then we remembered beautiful Galilee. Throughout the New Testament references to Galilee are many. Some of the most striking scenes of the New Testament take place on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

Galilee itself is not a large lake. We have hundreds of them larger in our own United States. Our Great Lakes, our Chautauquas, our Tahoes, are all larger than Galilee was.

It is only about thirteen miles long by seven miles across. It is pear-shaped. Each spring, as I have said, its waters rise when the snows of famous old Mount Hermon melt and pour into it just as our own Yosemite streams and

waterfalls are larger at noon time because of the snows that have melted on the mountains the preceding day and pour down their mountain pathways.

Galilee is buried in a deeply depressed basin. Authorities say that the Sea of Galilee has not changed much in nineteen centuries, so that it is about the same as it was at that time when Jesus walked its beautiful banks and sailed its placid surface and its storm-tossed waves. The depth of the sea is from north to south along the course of the Jordan River and is from one hundred and thirty feet to one hundred and forty-eight feet. This does not seem very deep compared with our own mountain lakes, which are unfathomable and have been estimated to be thousands of feet deep. Nor does the Lake of Galilee mean much in size or beauty as compared with our Tahoe. Indeed, we have more than twelve hundred lakes in our own Sierras, many of which are larger and deeper and more beautiful than Galilee, but there is no such music in their names to charm the world; no such romance eternal centering about their very memory; no Master ever walked their rugged shores; no romance of the Hope of the world ever centered in their blue waters.

Scenes on Galilee

Some of the most wonderful stories in connection with the life and ministry of Jesus happened on the shores of Galilee. In fact, the life of Jesus might be called a great world drama, with the shores of Galilee as a stage and the sea itself as a background. It was a wonderfully beautiful setting.

Flowing into the southern end of the lake is the River Jordan. Centered about this wonderful river, as we have seen, are some of the great scenes in the life of Christ: his call and his baptism.

But the first scene on the shores of Galilee is that where he calls four of his disciples to follow him.

"And walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers."

It was a beautiful scene in early morning. You will remember that Jesus had just come from his journey in the wilderness. First, there was his baptism in the Jordan. After this he walked down the Jordan and out into the wilderness, where his temptation occurred, and then back to Galilee.

Here we see some of the truly tremendous moments of his life spent out of doors, on a river, in a wilderness, and on a sea. He went from the river to the woods and thence to the sea.

Then when he had called the first two disciples from fishing in blue Galilee he went a bit further and saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with their father, mending their nets, and they straightway left the boats and followed Jesus.

The Four Thousand Fed

The second great scene was at evening time. The first was in the morning. There were only six people in the setting of the first scene. There are between four and five thousand in the evening setting. The sun has set, for Galilee is the lowest lake known to geologists, and the surrounding mountains hide the sun early. The four thousand had come to hear Jesus preach. His fame had gone throughout all the land about Galilee. His headquarters were at Capernaum, and the news of his miracles spread fast until people thronged about him.

He saw that they had had no chance to eat and that hundreds of them were hungry.

When Jesus asked how much food the disciples had, they replied that they had seven loaves and a few small fishes. And Jesus blessed the food and there was plenty and to spare. "And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children." It is the scene of one of his most spectacular miracles, this beautiful Galilee.

Jesus Walks the Sea

This is nighttime. The first great scene was morning; the second great scene of the feeding was evening; but the third great scene on the Lake of Galilee is nighttime.

He had just performed the great miracle of feeding the thousands, and this miracle, in addition to that of the healings that he had performed, aroused the people who followed him to a great pitch of enthusiasm, and they would make him king, whether or no. Jesus knew this as he stood by the lake, while evening shadows were gathering, and he withdrew into the mountains to be alone. While thus separated from them, his disciples, when it grew dark, started to cross the lake by boat to go into Capernaum. It was no unusual thing for the Master to remain out overnight in the mountains to pray, so they were not surprised.

Neither did they fear for him. He had his way.

He Had a Way

He had a way—
  This Christ of ours;
And when the day
  Was through, and flowers
Asleep, he went to pray.

It was his way
  To love the seas,
The rivers, mountains,
  Flowers, and trees;
It was his way
  To search the sky
By night, to know
  The stars, the clouds on high,
He loved them so.

He walked the Sea
Of Galilee
One stormy night
With footsteps light.
He brake the bread
With solemn tread
On that blest shore
As nevermore
Bread has been broke,
Nor ever woke
Such dreams, such hope
Where humans grope.

It was his way
  To laugh and play;
It was his way
  To dream and pray;

It was his way
To end the day
Beneath a tree
Beside the Sea
Of Galilee.

One of his ways was to pray at night on the mountainsides. So that night they started for Capernaum.

"And it was now dark," the story says in John, sixth chapter. And—as was frequently the way with the Sea of Galilee, for it had its peculiar ways also—a storm came up suddenly. They were frightened by the waves, but were more frightened when suddenly through the darkness they saw a form walking toward them across the turbulent waves. Jesus saw their fright and cried out to them, "Fear not; it is I."

Nothing happens in the Bible that does not have its purpose. It is orderly history, but all extraneous things are left out. The essentials in the life of Jesus are all in the New Testament. Much that would be fascinating reading has not been put in, but all that is fundamental has been set down for us, and it has been written "with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond."

And there is but one reason why poets, sages, prophets and the disciples, and Jesus himself,

spoke, and that was to teach. When they used a figure of speech connected with a river, a sea, a tree, a bird, a desert, a rock, a wave, or a storm, it was for a purpose. No figures of speech idle their way into the Book. They earn their way into that sacred auditorium of good people and good things and high and holy truths.

One may go through the Bible from the beginning and find that where figures of speech are used in connection with the sea many great truths are taught thereby, but the most dominant truth and the one that is more often repeated than any other is the great truth that is expressed in the phrase "He holdeth the sea in his hands." From the fascinating story of the creation of the world down through the early books of the Bible, through mountainlike Job into the tales of Galilee found in the New Testament, and on into Revelation, one might say that God is trying to show his children that he holds the sea in the hollow of his great, kindly hands of might and love.

"And the depth of the sea is like unto the depth that is God's love" is the other lesson that prophets and poets try to teach humanity through figures of speech connected with the sea. These two stand out above all others.

True there are many more, but these are the great twin stars of this figure, as it is used in the Book.

Dr. Jowett tells of one of his recent trips across the Atlantic when the ship was passing over the spot where the tragedy of the Titanic was enacted and the captain called his attention to the fact, saying, "We are now passing over the spot where the Titanic went down."

Dr. Jowett describes how impressive a moment it was to him, and then of his thought of the depth of God's love; his thought that God's love was deep enough to reach down into the mud of the deepest seas; high enough to reach into the skies; wide enough to reach into the uttermost corner of the world.

Photo by H. Hugo

"The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose"

CHAPTER VI

THE DESERT AND THE BIBLE

JUST like every other great physical fact of life, deserts had their influence on the writers of the Bible, and they were usually used as figures of speech to show what sin would do to a nation or to a human being. To speak shortly, deserts and sin in the Bible seem to be synonymous. Sin is a desert. A desert is sin.

One is astonished when he is told by science that the great Mojave Desert, with all of its burned-out stretches of waste and woe, is exactly the same soil composition as the wonderful San Joaquin Valley. Water is the difference. Every valley in California would be like the Mojave Desert if it were not for irrigation. Water it is that makes the desert to "blossom as the rose."

The Hebrew children were most certainly familiar with the great waste that we call the Sahara Desert. The memories and knowledge of this terrible place run through the minds of all biblical writers. Just as the wonderfully

clear skies of Egypt made them so familiar with the stars, so that they used figures of speech connected with the stars frequently, so their familiarity with Egypt's great desert compelled them to express their idea of sin and its consequences and its punishments in figures of speech which meant the desolation of the deserts.

So one is not surprised to find such a strong figure in Isaiah as "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." Bishop Quayle calls the desert the Great Sphinx of all nature. The desert is ever ominous, but fascinating in its danger.

I have seen the Mojave Desert under many interesting circumstances. One time that I crossed it—six times, to be exact—it was dry and parching under summer suns. I think that I have never seen or dreamed of anything that could be more desolate than the Mojave Desert. You have seen inland tracts of land where under a hot sun the earth bakes in great cakes of hard, dry earth, as though a miniature earthquake had cracked seams all through it. For hundreds of miles I have seen the Mojave Desert like this. Arid, acrid, blistered, burned, baked, sated, anemic, hated, bronzed, seared,

singed, dead, desolate, lost, barren—are all words that will describe some feature of the Mojave Desert under the summer sun.

Alkali pools here and there, white and ghost-like as the death that they verily hold for humanity, glimmer and stink under the blistering sun. For miles at a stretch one will see the stain of this alkali glinting under the sun's rays like snow glistening in the light of the great orb of day—glittering as diamonds glitter.

Sagebrush and mesquite abound, and great, high-reaching cactus, that looms in the day and in the night like some huge, armed phantom of the desert reaching to squeeze one's very soul to death.

Joaquin Miller's "Ship of the Desert" is one of the most thrilling poems of American topography. It is the story of a great ship that sailed over the western continent when the ocean was still finding its bed and its pathways on our plains, ere it had been bulged back by the upheavals of the Rocky Mountains. And the tale is told that a ship has been found buried in the sand in the middle of the great American Desert in recent years. But it is a ghost ship, as are all things connected with the desert.

I have seen the desert by middle morning,

when I thought, as the train lunged through its blistering heat, that I could not manage to take another breath, when I stood with a towel at the faucet of the ice-water tank, applying it to my head for relief.

I have seen the Mojave Desert with its dry river and creek beds running for hundreds of miles without a single drop of water, panting under the blistering suns, like a tired dog, done out with his hanging tongue lifeless. The rivers and the creeks of the desert are the hanging tongues of the dog of the desert. The tongue of the dog desert is always out in summer time, hanging lifeless.

But I have seen the Mojave Desert also when it was a thing of marvelous beauty. One mid afternoon, off in the distance right in the pathway of the train I saw a beautiful lake, such as many a weary traveler has seen before on desert journeyings. It arose against the horizon, and after awhile I could see a city on the shores of this lake. And such a beautiful city it was! I imagined that it was like the Celestial City of white minarets, domes, and towers. The blue, cool waters of the lake, and the golden domes of the city beside the lake I was sure was the next stopping place. I called the conductor of the car and asked him what

lake that was off in the distance, and what was the name of the city, and he looked at me in utter amazement, and he looked at me with a queer look—as if I were crazy, and I guess I was, for there was no lake there and there was no city there. I had heard of a mirage all my life, but I didn't have sense enough to recognize one when I saw it.

I have seen an Arizona afterglow—and I think that I have seen nothing more beautiful than this on the desert. It is not like a sunset; it is more subtle, it is more weird, it is more beautiful. I think that this desert afterglow must be to the desert what the aurora borealis is to the frozen planes of the north. It scintillates with beauty. Then it is soft with a strange wonder. It turns the tawny earth, and jutting cliffs, and flat hilltops to a strange copper, bronze, purple hue. It subdues one, this afterglow on the desert, subdues one like unto an evening prayer. The Angelus of the desert is the afterglow.

I have seen automobiles passing across the desert, and I have heard, even in these modern days, ghostly stories of automobile parties found dead of thirst, a hundred miles from a human being or a drop of water. I have seen bronzed Indians burned and blistered, driving

their sluggish ponies with water—precious water—on their wagons.

I have seen the bleached bones of cattle and horses, skeleton after skeleton, lying along the tracks. I have seen here and there the coyote, the waif of the desert, bounding across the acrid plains. I have seen, reaching up from a little mound here and there across the everlasting desert, white crosses that have been erected to mark the dying place of hosts of intrepid pioneers.

But I have another picture of this same desert region of America. It is a picture of the desert after the rains. It is a picture of swollen streams instead of dry beds of water; it is a picture of freshness and cleanness, and life and vegetation. It is a picture of shooting herbs, and of a far spread of green, and an odor of growing things. And, best of all, it is a picture of a perfect mass, a blanket of beautiful, tiny flowers, springing up almost overnight to cry out to the world that the desert has not been entirely deserted of all beauty and color. I have seen the desert where the Rio Grande and the Colorado flow, and I have seen green stations springing up with trees and flowers, and as beautiful lawns as I ever saw in any place to bless the inhabitants thereof.

And even amid the most desolate of days—even amid the most arid of stretches for hundreds of miles around—I have seen a little home, where the keeper thereof had brought water from the mountains; and there I have seen trees growing, and grass in a neatly kept lawn, and flowers on the window sill, and little children playing in the yard, and a mother waving from the window as the great train thundered past on into the burning, parching desert.

And then I have had a dream in a poem of what this great desert may some day be. I have dreamed as I have passed through this desert time after time, with the dying earth and nothing else for hundreds of miles around me, and the pulsing heat beating in through the window of the fast-running train blistering my face—one hundred and eighteen in the shade—and, as I have talked with men who know, and they have told me that exactly the same kind of soil prevails in this great desert that we find in the most fertile section of beautiful California, and I have looked off across that same desert as the train sped and I have seen the great, snow-capped mountains, looming in the background, awaiting the day when men will take their freshness and their life-giving

properties, and their Hope across these desert plains; and as I have looked I have dreamed of the next hundred years, when the European wars are over and the immigration of the old world has found that it must crowd out on to the desert—and the necessity of the case has made our great engineers bring these waters of the mountain snows into the desert places—and I have dreamed a greater city than Los Angeles and a greater city than San Francisco in the midst of the Mojave Desert.

And then I have heard sweeping across the desert winds by noon, whispering like a phantom ghost of prophecy—a voice whining like a dying soul of white wistfulness, wailing like a Moses in sight of the promised land, only not to be a part of it: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

Deserts of the Bible

To get a fair idea of what the deserts of the Bible mean one must, first of all, revise his definition of a desert a little. The Bible desert means, in addition to a Sahara, a "wilderness," where there is no habitation. These words are used interchangeably in the Bible: a wilderness and a desert.

The various interpretative words and phrases that we find used in the Bible to describe a desert or a wilderness are:

Where herds are driven.

Without a settled population.

The abode of pelicans.

Where wild asses and jackals and ostriches dwell.

A dry land.

To be arid.

Salt land.

Desolate—Devastation—Waste.

In the howling waste of the desert.

The two great deserts that stand out in Old and in New Testament history are "the wilderness of the wanderings" and "the wilderness of Judæa," the former that section of country southwest of Canaan, south of the Mediterranean Sea, through which the children of Israel wandered; and the latter the wilderness of Judæa, which witnessed the commencement of John the Baptist's ministry.

Two hundred and eighty times in the Old Testament the figure of speech has to do with the wilderness and the desert, and, except in twelve instances, in these two hundred and eighty times the translation of the Hebrew word is "wilderness." In twelve cases it is

translated "desert" and one of these is that of our text, where it is used as both "wilderness" and as "desert," Isaiah evidently intending it as a figure that should include both desert and wilderness, to make it stronger.

He meant to say that, although your country, your race, your souls be as dry, arid, desolate, burned, parched, blistered, and bronzed, as sated, anemic, bleached, as dead in sin as the wilderness and as the desert, yet the flowing streams of the everlasting love of God will make them to "blossom as the rose."

Sin is the desert. Sin is Mojave. Sin is the sneaking coyote of the desert. Sin is the acrid salt of the desert. Sin is the burning, poisonous alkali. Sin is the baked, dead earth. Sin is the shadow of death that hangs over a life like a deceitful mirage. Sin is hate. Sin is the scorpion of the desert. Sin dries up the soul. Sin burns up the freshness of the heart. Sin saps the cleaner emotions of life. Sin kills the beautiful and the pure in a human soul. Love of art, love of flowers, love for beautiful music, love for children, love for wife and home is all burned out of a soul that is full of sin. Sin makes a soul like a desert.

And there is just one thing that will break up the dried, baked soul; just one thing that

will bring back the freshness, the purity, the hope, the sweetness to the soil of that life and make the desert of a sin-sated soul "blossom as the rose," and that is the love of Jesus Christ, and the rivers of the water of life that flow through him.

CHAPTER VII

THE STARS AND THE BIBLE

A STUDY of the stars is full of strange fascination. What individual is there who is not filled with a lively interest when he sees a "star" shoot in the skies? That brilliant, far-off flash, which comes so suddenly and is so suddenly gone—so suddenly, indeed, that you scarcely have time to call your friend's attention to it. It burns itself out along a pathway that may have stretched out thousands of miles before coming into the earth's atmosphere, which converted it into the ball of fire that you see; and though it may cover a long distance as a burning mass, yet it is all over so quickly that you hardly have time to send a message from your eye to your brain and thence from your brain to your lips to shout the news to your friend. One night crossing the great Pacific we counted nine stars that loosed their anchors in the tropical sky and plunged their fiery pathway to extinction.

The Bible is full of intensely interesting things, as I have said before, from poetry and

Photo by H. Hugo

"When I consider thy heavens"

romance—old-fashioned romance in the Song of Songs—to the great drama of Job; from the most fascinating war stories to marvelous tales of the sky and stars.

The attitude of the Bible toward the stars is first, that God created them. The third verse of the eighth psalm reads: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

Second, that he gave them their paths according to fixed and unchangeable laws. Job, chapter 38, verse 31, says: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?"

Third, that he calls them by their names. In Isaiah, chapter 40, verse 26, we find: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names."

The Stars of the Bible

The constellation of the Great Bear is mentioned in Job. We are familiar with it to-day and can see it to-night if we look up at the skies.

The constellation Orion—mentioned also in

Job—literally means "The Fool," the Arabian name for "Orion," that constellation which seems to form the shape of a man, "The impious one." The Chaldeans called it "The Giant." Therefore Job says of this star in rebuking his questioners, "Canst thou loose the bands of Orion?" Job pictures Orion as a great, impious giant chained to the heavens. Where will you find a more vivid or interesting picture than this?

"Pleiades" used in Job means "heap," "plenty," "cluster," "multitude," and consists of seven larger stars and seven smaller ones grouped together in the sky. The Arabs called this cluster of stars "The Star" par excellence because of its monthly conjunction with the moon. They used this conjunction to mark time by.

The Persian Poets, including Omar Kháyyám, thought of Pleiades as a beautiful rosette, with a heart for a central star.

The name used by Luther was "Die Glucke." "The Clucking Hen" reminds one of the English name "Hen and Chickens"—a large star, the mother hen surrounded by a number of smaller stars, the chickens, likened to a hen with her brood under her wings. Maybe Jesus was looking into the skies, and this figure sug-

gested itself to him as he stood that night over Jerusalem on the hill, and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

The sign of the zodiac, which comes forth in season and cannot be led forth, is also mentioned in Job (see Job 38. 32).

Job was the great star man. He may have been the great pessimist; he may have been the great discouraged man for a time, but after a while he looked up at the stars and, when he looked, his hope sprang anew in his breast and he was unafraid. Job didn't look down long. To look up at the stars may do many things for you, but one thing it will do that I am certain about, and that is that it will make you very humble. And another thing that it will do will be to fill your heart with *hope* forever. The stars are God's hope beacons. Job speaks of "the chambers of the south," a group of stars that looked to him like great opening doors to the sky chambers.

The Assyrians and the Hebrews both knew that Venus, our own particular star, was both a morning and an evening star. They called it

"The Shining One," "Son of the Morning," etc.

The Bible is full of references to the sun and the moon—for example: "When the sun went down," "Till the sun be hot," "Clear as the sun," "The greater of the two great lights," "To rule the day," "The tabernacle of the sun," "Rejoiceth as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and as a strong man to run a race."

The moon is spoken of as "The lesser light to rule the night."

For four millenniums before the Hebrew people, the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Babylonians, the Egyptians had been studying the stars. But they had been studying them as gods, as forces in themselves influencing both men and the earth. They were so powerful that they could influence by magic vegetation and human destiny. Certain crops and certain favored people thrived under certain conjunctions of stars. We still, some of us, cherish as a relic of those days of ignorance the idea that certain things planted "in the light of the new moon" will thrive better than if planted at any other time.

The ancients mentioned also believed that certain stars influenced the lives of men.

The Hebrews taught the world a new idea

of our relation to the stars, and Christianity has strengthened that teaching. Christianity has taught the world that, instead of the stars having power to kill or slay or influence, they are under the powerful hand of the Eternal God. God is the Master of the stars. Man is free from their harmful influence.

Shakespeare caught the Christian attitude toward the stars, as contrasted with the old attitude, in these words: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars that we are underlings, but in ourselves." In shorter words, God has freed us from the influence of the stars, and has given us right to go our own free ways to carve our own fortunes eternally—to lose or to save our own immortal souls!

When I Consider Thy Heavens

Some people need to go out and look at the stars a while to awaken them to a recognition of their own insignificance. It is good medicine for certain marked types of egotism. The less intelligence a human being has the less he sees in the stars. A pig never knows that there are any such things as stars. I doubt if the cattle of the field ever see the stars.

The higher the type of intelligence the more men see in the stars of God, the Eternal. God

is not the stars. The stars are not God. That is pantheism. But God is back of the stars. He handles them. He swerves them. He guides them. He operates them.

He is the Dispatcher. I have been in a great train dispatcher's office in Pittsburgh, where hundreds of trains a day are directed in and out of Pittsburgh. I have watched the dispatcher with his charts before him; watched him directing freight trains, express trains, locals, by the hundreds. It was a marvelously fascinating study. I can see God, the great Dispatcher of the heavens, constantly doing this very thing with his ultimate consciousness, with ease, with power, with concentration, with poise, with perfect unity.

I say, when you get to feeling slightly about God and greatly about yourself—your poor, little, infinitesimal self—go out and look at the stars, as Sid says in the American Magazine:

IF YOUR EGO BOTHERS YOU—GO LOOK AT THE STARS

A cube one seven-thousandth of an inch in diameter is a pretty small object. It would not choke a mosquito. You could not see it unless you used a microscope. Possibly, if it were made of the right kind of stuff, and if it flew into your eye, you might feel it. But even that is doubtful.

Yet "Uncle John" Brashear, in his delightful article in

this number, shows that a little cube just that big floating around in Lake Erie takes up exactly as much room in the lake, by comparison, as our earth fills in the space around us, known and measured by astronomers, the boundaries of which are only as far away as the nearest star.

This recalls Mark Twain's great story, "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven," wherein are recorded the difficulties which the captain confronted in the next world when he tried to explain where he came from. He said that San Francisco was his native place. Nobody in heaven had heard of San Francisco. Then he named California, and, meeting with no response, he went on with considerable irritation to mention the United States and America. Nobody had heard of them. Finally he claimed the earth as his former home, and at last, after a long search through the records of heaven, it was discovered that among the billions upon billions of stars, worlds, constellations and planets there was, in the dusty tomes, a slight reference to an insignificant speck known in heaven as The Wart, and recognized by Stormfield as our good old mother earth.

In this connection it is also well to remember that the wonders of time are as great as the wonders of space. Nobody knows or can even guess how long this Big Show has been running. Anyway, it is a very old show as well as a very large one.

I am glad that "Uncle John" has brought this matter to our attention again. It is a good thing once in a while to be set right on our comparative importance in the scheme of things. At this time it is an especially welcome and refreshing bit of comment. For one thing, it makes the emperor of Germany seem less important. Also, it will help us to pass through the egotism and dogmatism of a Presidential campaign with better perspective and more humor. Furthermore, the hardships we have to

endure may be nothing compared with those which are pestering the inhabitants of other worlds, who, for all we know, may be even more self-centered and sensitive than we—though this seems hardly possible.

That a knowledge of the stars helps to keep one's ego in proper restraint is demonstrated in the case of Mr. Brashear himself, for in all Pittsburgh, so Merle Crowell tells me, there isn't a man with less ego than "Uncle John." Anybody, from the mayor down to the tiniest newsboy on Smithfield Street, will swear to you that he is the biggest man in the city—and the simplest and most attractive. Street-car motormen and conductors spy the old gentleman a block away and hold up traffic for the privilege of getting him as a passenger. They love him because he loves them—and because arrogance and superiority are totally absent from his make-up. From studying the stars "Uncle John" has learned humility.

And if, again, in modern statistics you want to feel your own utter dependence, and your insignificance, and if you want to know what the psalmist was talking about when he said, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" go out under the night skies awhile alone. Mr. John Brashear, in The American Magazine, says:

No man can study the stars without becoming bigger and better. The earth is too much with most of us; and

we are inclined to be too much with and within ourselves. We have an exaggerated sense of our own importance in the world and of the importance of the world in the universe.

The science of the stars must always remain an unfinished science. There are infinite areas of unexplored wonders that will never come within the compass of the eye of man until the glass through which he now sees darkly shall be needed no more.

Most folks consider this old world a pretty big place, but if you tossed a cube one-seven thousandth of an inch in diameter into Lake Erie it would occupy the same relative space in that great inland sea that our earth occupies in a universe terminating at the *nearest* star, Alpha Centauri, and extending a similar distance from our sun in all directions. Such a universe contains 15,625,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (fifteen thousand six hundred and twenty-five undecillion) miles, but it is only an infinitestimal dot in the actual universe. Our sun itself is one million three hundred thousand times as big as the earth, but photometric measures have shown that the heat-giver of our solar system is greatly exceeded in size by perhaps a majority of the millions of stars that stud the heavens.

If you could ride from the earth to Alpha Centauri, on a train going at the rate of a mile a minute, you would reach your destination in forty-eight million years. At the rate sound travels, if a song were to be sung on Alpha Centauri it would be three million eight hundred thousand years before we could hear it. This neighbor of ours is thirty-five trillion miles away. A spider's thread from a cocoon reaching to it would weigh five hundred tons.

Our earth in its revolutions on its own axis and its trip around the sun and outward into space makes a journey of nine hundred and eighty-four million miles a year; but

the old clock never varies; there is never a jar or tremor, and we are back again on the hundredth of a second. Do you know it would have cost me one billion five hundred million dollars if I had to pay my way so far at the rate of two cents a mile during my journey of seventy-five years?

We usually think of the sun as a big ball of fire that is benignant enough to keep the earth from freezing. But science shows us that the sun can supply two billion two hundred million worlds like the earth with the same amount of heat—and not work overtime. If we could build a column of ice fifteen miles in diameter from the earth to the moon, two hundred and thirty-eight thousand miles away, and then turn the sun's terrific heat on it, it would take just one second to convert all that ice into steam.

But we do not have to go roaming through space to find wonderful things. The lover of the beautiful finds in the colors of a rose the same light waves that stream from the stars; he finds a kinship between the rushing locomotive and the motion of the stellar worlds through space.

The more we study familiar things the more beauty we find. If we study them scientifically, so much the better. Some folks declare that science robs us of the pleasing sense of awe and mystery. Ah, no! Science merely replaces one mystery with another of a greater and grander order.

Does it strip the beauty from a landscape photograph if you are told that, during the exposure of your camera, from forty to eighty million of light waves hammered against the negative in one tenth of a second? Maclaurin has given this splendid illustration of what it means when a ray of violet light impinges on the negative for that length of time:

"Imagine you are watching a log floating near the sea-

shore and that it strikes against a pier as it rises and falls with the waves, say, once in six seconds. In order to correspond to the number of light waves in one tenth of a second it would have to beat against that pier for more than two million years."

One night I spent at Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton, California. I had there a revelation. I had lived in the valleys and the low lands so long that I had come to think of the stars as all being on one plane. That night as I looked into the Milky Way through the great telescope of that world-famous observatory I saw the stars for the first time in many planes. Plane after plane, depth after depth twinkled before my astonished eyes, and my soul was stirred as it had never been stirred before by sight of stars.

I was not only seeing the front yard of the star-world but I was seeing the back yard as well. And beyond that back yard I was seeing the star meadows and fields; and back of them I was seeing a deep, dense forest of stars; and back of that, several rivers of stars flowing into an ocean of stars. Then I saw an entire mountain range of stars, and from this mountain range of stars there were volcanoes belching innumerable stars into birth. Back of this mountain range of stars I saw far reaches of

prairies of stars and other oceans and other nations of stars until I was dizzy with the depth of the star-planes.

One is impressed with the great spiritual thought that God created these stars; that he runs their destinies with world-old laws that are unswerving; that he made their paths and set them going therein, even the path of a Haley's Comet, a century long; that he calls them by name; that he who numbers the hairs of my head and does not fail to notice even the falling of a common sparrow, that he has named me also. One is impressed with the fact that he too, like Job, may look up and be the great star man: always hopeful, always looking up and not down; filling one's heart with hope; and at the same time filling one's soul with a divine humility.

And one has hope that through the stars we may be brought closer to that great star that shone over Bethlehem's humble bed and to the Christ for whom it shone—the star of Eternal Hope, the star of a great Beacon Light. And, as one studies the stars of the Bible, he has hope that he too may learn, through them, to chum with the God of Stars like our beloved John Muir, of whom it was written when he passed from the valley to the hills and thence to the

mountain peaks and beyond to walk amid the stars with God:

"John of the Mountains,
Wonderful John,
Is over the summit
And traveling on.
With a smile and a hail
Where the glaciers slide
And a streak of red
Where the Condors glide
And John is over the Great Divide.

"John of the Mountains
Camps to-day
By a level spot
On the Milky Way.
And God is telling him
How he rolled
The smoking earth
From the iron mold,
Planted the Redwood trees of old
And hammered the mountains
Till they grew cold.

"John of the Mountains
Says, 'I knew
And I just wanted to
Grapple the hand of You.
And now that we've met
I know we'll be Chums
And camp together 'till chaos comes.'"

It was on the way from Shanghai to Manila that I caught my first glimpse of that most satisfying of all the star groups of the skies, the

Southern Cross. Night by night from Manila to Java I watched it. It came to be a part of one's very soul. It was a most satisfying thing. Early in the evening it was slightly tilted as the cross of Christ must have been when it was first thrust into the hole that had been dug for it, but by midnight the Southern Cross in Manila, Singapore, Borneo, Sumatra, Java, or any southern viewpoint stands erect in the skies, near the zenith, like a mighty cross of white fire and glory. The missionaries in the tropics tell me that this constellation of stars comes to be to them an old friend, like a mountain or a river. They look up at it each night. When terror spreads, disease threatens, perils by day and night encompass them, discouragements confront them, somehow that fiery cross of Christ hovers over them in the far off equatorial lands to comfort and bless. It hovers over them like God's great friendly hands in blessing. It says unto them each night, "Peace, be still."

For eight months the Southern Cross has been a constant companion. Sometimes I would glimpse it from the mountaintops of Luzon in the Philippine Islands; sometimes from a small boat on a river's breast in Borneo; sometimes from my couch on the hillside at

night, where Java's volcanoes spit fire; sometimes through the trees of a jungle trail in Sumatra; sometimes from north of the equator, sometimes from south of the equator; sometimes from the top of a mission house at midnight; sometimes from the deck of a ship on seven seas.

But the one time that it burned its way into my memory never to die was during a typhoon on the South China Sea between Borneo and Singapore. It had been blowing so terrifically, with now and then that hushed, ominous warning of more terrific winds yet to come, that I became terrified, and, dressing, left my stateroom and went to the bridge of the small Dutch ship, whose captain I had come to know intimately.

He was anxiously pacing up and down the bridge. The sky was sullen and starless. Not a ray of light penetrated that black blanket of gloom anywhere from horizon to horizon.

Two hours passed. I searched the sky anxiously minute after minute to catch even a faint glimpse of a star. I had a feeling that if I could but see one single star, it would mean promise and hope.

We were sailing due south because of the wind. The little ship was less than five hun-

dred tons and the South China Sea was ferociously playing with it.

Then suddenly the sky seemed to slit in two to the south and a star—a single star—appeared. The captain smiled at me and pointed. A few minutes later the southern winds swept back a further patch of black clouds and another star appeared to the left and further down in the sky toward the horizon. Then a third star appeared to the right opposite the second star.

At once I realized that a tremendous thing was happening before my bewildered eyes. It seemed like a miracle. It seemed like God's promise of safety from storm. It brought back the miracle of the rainbow on the way to France. It was so dramatically wonderful that I hesitate to tell it, as appearing like some figment of an author's imagination; but with a shout in my soul and a song on my lips before tear-dimmed eyes suddenly the clouds were drawn back by the southern winds, as if the hands of God were in them and behind them, and the full and beautiful form of that star-born Southern Cross lay peacefully against the sky shining out over Java and the world. Other stars had been breaking through these storm-hid skies, but for mine eyes there was no such

glory that storm-flung night, and no such peace, no such beauty, and no such thrilling hope as that suggested by the white cross in the southern sky.

So I think the cross of Christ, that white cross of all skies, must mean to the world when its storms thunder and its skies are black.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BIRDS OF THE BIBLE

IN a wonderfully interesting book by this title, published by The Methodist Book Concern, Gene Stratton-Porter names seventeen distinct species of birds of the Bible and gives a chapter to each bird. These birds that are mentioned frequently in the Bible are the dove, the eagle, the sparrow, the ostrich, the cock and hen, the hawk, the quail and partridge, the bittern, the swallow, the peacock, the stork, the raven, the pelican, the pigeon, the crane, and the owl.

More and more as one studies the Book he finds that the writers of the Bible were out-of-doors men, and that they were writing to an out-of-doors people, and that they used out-of-doors figures of speech to make themselves understood by those to whom they were talking.

Beginning with Moses, Mrs. Porter says that more references to birds are found in the writings of Moses than in the writings of any other character of the Bible. There were two reasons for this. The first one was that Moses

Photo by H. Hugo

"We spread our wings on the winds of light"

had access to all of the bird lore, all of the books and writings and knowledge of the court of Pharaoh, where he lived. The second reason was that Egypt was an out-of-doors land; and the people that Moses led out of their captivity lived an out-of-doors life. They didn't know what it meant to have shelter from storms, or sun or rain. They were compelled to live out of doors. They understood the out-of-doors. They knew what the stars in the clear Egyptian heavens looked like. They knew the animals of the desert; they knew the birds; they knew the Nile. Therefore, when Moses wanted them to understand clearly what he was trying to tell them, he used figures of speech that had references to the lives of the birds, just as we have seen heretofore in this series that writers of the Bible have used figures of speech with references to trees, stars, rivers, mountains, deserts, clouds, waves, fog, and snow. If all the figures of speech that teach great spiritual lessons through the medium of out-of-doors references, were taken out of the Bible, it would look like a great honeycomb with the honey removed. One grows more and more astonished as he follows out a thought of this kind at the almost innumerable references to out-of-doors objects. But at the same time one knows the reason

therefor when he stops to remember that from Moses down to John on Patmos, every great character and nearly every great incident of the Bible had as its stage setting the great out of doors. And of all the figures with reference to out-of-doors things, perhaps the figures with reference to birds will capture and have captured human hearts with the most appeal. Some of the most tender quotations of the entire Book have been quotations in reference to birds.

It was a tenderly pathetic cry of Jesus himself, who said: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

It was the sweet voice of poet David who tried to show the people to whom he sang the protecting power and the everlasting love of the Father heart: "He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust."

Do you want to take a walk out into the woods of Lebanon in spring-time? Do you want to be transported, even amid winter's snows and summer's heat, into the cool, awakening woods of early spring? Then go to the Song of Solomon, that sweet love lyric: "For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the

singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell."

Or, again, hear David, sweet singer, as he says, "I will trust in the covert of thy wings"; or, again: "In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountains?" And in his prayer that he be kept he pleads, "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings."

And of all the tender words that Jesus spoke, the tenderest are these: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

Then, next to the above sighing of a great heart, there is one other to rival it in beauty of imagery: "Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God."

Mrs. Porter says, in Birds of the Bible, already referred to, a thing that we know to be true in regard to our own temples and churches: "Because so many of the swallows

nested in the temples, the whole species was held almost sacred, for any bird which built in a place of worship was supposed to be claiming the protection of the Almighty." Many a boy has heard in springtime the twittering of sparrows in the eaves of the old home church of a Sunday morning while the preacher was preaching. Some of us have memories of doves and pigeons nesting in the old belfry of the church, and vividly recall the hurried flight of those birds when the sexton rang the bells for church.

One morning during the great war I was in France. I was sitting in springtime beside the great cathedral at Toul. It was a wonderfully beautiful morning, full of throbbing spring. Off in the distance I could hear the great guns rumbling. It seemed so incongruous that guns should be in action on such a beautiful morning. It was my last day on the line. I had received orders to leave that noontime and I was taking a last look at that beautiful old cathedral. An aviation camp was located in the fields below Toul. As I sat on a stone bench in the little park beside the church now and then an airplane would hum overhead, so low down that its shadow would pass over the great stone cathedral and frighten the thousands of birds

that found shelter in its little crannies and crevices. Each time a humming plane would pass overhead, what seemed to be like a veritable cloud of birds would swarm into the air, darting out of little holes and sheltering places, crevices and crannies where they had found shelter. For a few minutes they would literally make the air black overhead and fill it with the din of their frightened chattering. The only other memory I have of such a dense cloud of birds is of the time when as a boy, of a summer evening, I went swimming in the old Ohio River. I remember that often for hours at a time the sky would be literally obscured by dense clouds of birds flying southward following the pathway of the river.

I wondered at so many birds about the old cathedral. I asked the people if that was usual, and they told me that the birds always found shelter in the edifice, but that since the war began it seemed that many hundreds of thousands had come that had never been seen there before. They said that it seemed to them that all the birds of France had flown to the great cathedrals back of the lines for shelter. They had always been accustomed to seeing birds about the cathedrals, but never in such clouds and masses and swarms. They had decided

that all the birds of the fields and woods along the front had been frightened back from their places of habitation and that they too, like the distracted people of France, had taken shelter in the temples of God in war time. Now and then we read a poem such as Service has written for us of a lark blithely singing amid the thundering guns, but those who were on the front lines for any length of time know also that birds were seldom seen anywhere. They had all been driven back. And the truth came to me on that spring morning, with startling suddenness and startling warmth, that the birds of distracted France had literally fulfilled the scriptures and had found refuge in the temples of God. And so it is that Mrs. Porter, in her Birds of the Bible, confirms the childhood memory of some of us: of twittering birds in the eaves of the old home-town church. The thought takes us back to the temple in Jerusalem, and recalls David's song of the sparrow that had found her nest at the altars of God's temple.

How the Birds of Literature Teach Their Lessons

Not only the writers of the Bible use the birds to teach great truths to humanity, but the

writers of all time have used the birds to teach their lessons.

Hear the great Burke sing the truth that he learned from the lark:

"Teach me, O lark! with thee to greatly rise
To exalt my soul and lift it to the skies!"

Or Byron:

"A light broke in upon my soul—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again;
The sweetest song ear ever heard."

Shakespeare calls the lark "the herald of the morn" and Browning, in "Pippa Passes," sings of the lark as the morning bird: "The lark's on the wing." Henry van Dyke and a dozen other poets sing of the dove as the homing bird of evening shadows.

And the bird of the night is by the poets called the owl. And the bird of blazing noontime is the eagle; the eagle who dares to fly straight into the sun. Tennyson sings of him:

"He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands."

Or who can forget Longfellow's soothing cry for a poem from "some humbler poet":

"Like a feather wafted downward
From an eagle in its flight."

Not less striking are the words of Bishop Quayle, poet and preacher, who, reaching out into the skies for a figure of speech that would sing his supreme contempt for certain littler things and little men, said: "I don't care a fluttering feather from a seagull's wing for those men and things!"

Memories of Birds

What man or woman among us does not have memories of birds? Some of us more than others. I knew one child not yet eight years of age who would sit for an hour watching a bird build a nest, or simply watching it in a tree or a bush. That was play enough for him. And I, for one, say, bless the child that learns to play with birds and flowers. Blessed shall he be, for the birds and the flowers shall teach him lessons of everlasting truth that he could learn in no other playground of life.

One has most vivid and distinct memories of scenes connected with birds, when the harmless hunting of birds has been a hobby with all one's life: I remember a phœbe that I watched for an hour. It was the first phœbe of spring, and it played around an old bridge, where they are frequently found. It was spring when I watched the first redwing blackbird. It was

on the way to a little country church. I had my bird glasses with me and sat down on a railroad bridge and listened to that redwing with its sweetly rich gurgle, like water running softly over stones under shaded trees. There was another late Saturday afternoon as I was walking six miles along a country road to a little church in the country. Suddenly there came the singing of a bobolink, that bird which flies in long, swift sweeps and sings on the wing. I watched a newly arrived flock of these wonderful birds with the strange coloration of white on top and dark on the bottom as they played and chattered in low trees along the fence. That hour will stand out forever in my mind because of those newly arrived birds. I shall never forget a certain Sunday afternoon and the thrill of seeing a grosbeak in a tall walnut tree and watching him and his mate build a nest. I can see the very hillside, where a ravine ran through it and a little stream gurgled. I shall never forget that sleepy-eyed morning in a wood, just before daybreak, nor the night-hawk with its wings streaked with white, half asleep on a branch overhead. I shall never forget the first time and the very spot that I saw that most brilliantly colored red-headed woodpecker, one of three types of

woodpeckers—including the hairy and the downy. It was beside a river; a small river, in a little park, back of a hotel in Pennsylvania. I watched it pecking away at a tree, with its crimson head flashing in the sunlight and its coal-black body and its snow-white feathers scintillating together. I think there are no such brilliant contrasts of color in any bird. I shall never forget the orchard in California where a Baltimore oriole flashed through the green trees with its orange and crimson. Nor the brilliant mid-morning when I saw my first scarlet tanager; nor that afternoon on the banks of the Ohio where I caught my first glimpse of the crimson cardinal (red bird).

And just a few days ago I added another bird picture to the everlasting gallery. I was watching a great airplane fly overhead. As I was watching that plane, suddenly a vibrating humming-bird shot like a blaze of fire across my vision and poised itself like a quivering tuning fork in the air before a crimson trumpet flower and then shot its long beak into the heart of the flower to extract the honey. I turned from the plane and forgot it. It was so feeble, and so helpless, and so uninteresting compared with that humming-bird.

Once, at another time, I remember being im-

pressed with the superiority of the bird in the air over man. It was in Boston and I was watching my first air-flight exhibit. It was a thrilling day. Such heights as ten thousand feet in the air astonished the world then. It was a windy day. Several of the most spectacular stunts were not allowed and not possible that day because a wind of sixty-five miles an hour was blowing. And all the while a lot of seagulls were soaring leisurely through the air against the wind and playing like children let out of school in summertime; taking the wind waves in long, graceful sweeps, with perfect ease, now flapping their great white strong wings leisurely; now floating like a coasting automobile, or swimming, swept on the crest of a great surf wave. And all the while man's engines were spluttering and thundering and noising about over the grounds, getting as if ready to fly and flying not.

God's Care for Us

"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." All through the Book, prophets and poets and teachers—aye, the eternal Christ himself—try to show to humanity God's care for his children with a bird figure. It is a beautiful figure. There is

but one other as beautiful, and that is the old, old figure of the shepherd caring for his sheep; and this is always the most tender of all to me.

Another day, as David watched a mother bird flying over her nest, he cried out, "I will trust in the covert of thy wings." Somehow we have learned to expect from the bird life this protection to young. Even to-day, as we study bird life, we find innumerable stories of mother birds and father birds who have been willing to sacrifice themselves that their young may live. Perhaps the most striking and universal illustration of this willingness to self sacrifice is found in the story of the quail. And what boy who has lived in the woods has not seen an example of it time and time again? We have seen a mother quail, when one approached her nest of young ones, run out and throw herself on the ground, simulating a broken wing that she might lead the stranger away from her family. She was willing to throw herself into the path of danger and even to sacrific her own life that her young might be safe. Once in a little village that I know in the East this story of the sacrifice of a bird came to the attention of some of my own friends. It was a common pair of martins. They had for years built their nest in a little

bird house on the public square. When fall came each year they would go South together —this loving pair of birds. But one fall they did not go. The folks saw the male bird flying in and out of the nest, just as if he intended to stay. Frosts came and still he did not go. The female bird was not seen. It grew colder and colder, and people wondered why the birds did not go South. They would freeze to death when the ice and snow came. The male bird kept going and coming all the time, carrying food into the box. Then one morning they found him frozen at the bottom of the nest, and, when they climbed up to the box, they found out why he had remained behind when the other birds had gone. They found that the mate of this bird had in some way gotten a heavy string fastened to her foot and could not fly, and, rather than leave her, he had remained behind in spite of the age-old instinct to migrate when the winter came. He had remained loyal even unto death. He would not desert his mate and let her starve to death.

And so we can see that there was no better way, no tenderer way for David to make clear God's great Fatherly care and love for us, his willingness even to sacrifice his own Son, than in the words he used as he saw a mother bird

hovering over her nest with protecting wings: "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust."

God Desires that We Trust Him

The birds teach us not only God's care for us, but they teach us to put our trust in him. They teach us faith in him and in his power and strength. David gives us the text again: "In the Lord I put my trust: how say ye to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountain?" Or, again, "I will trust in the covert of thy wings." Or, again, "I will haste me to a shelter from the stormy wind and tempest."

Here God is pictured as a great mountain rock, as a mountain of hope, as a great rugged tree in which we may trust and find shelter from the stormy blast.

There are several versions of the origin of that great hymn, "Jesus, Lover of my soul." Probably the best-known story concerning its production is that in which the author is pictured as "sitting at an open window, when a little bird, pursued by a hawk, flew in and took refuge in the poet's bosom," the incident suggesting the hymn. While this story in itself has no historical support, it may well be adapted to the troubles and distresses of this

present life. The poor, helpless bird may typify many a stricken human soul. Such a soul—a woman—came to my attention once while I was preaching at a camp meeting. She wrote a pathetic letter, and said in that letter:

DEAR MR. STIDGER:

Please forgive me for this intrusion, but I am writing to you in hopes of your being able to help my husband in his terrible conflict.

I am heartbroken and have all but gone insane the past year, for my husband, through prosperity and worldly companions in business, has backslidden terribly. And O, Mr. Stidger, still worse—he has permitted another woman to come into his life, and now he says he is going to break up our home, leaving me and our baby girl, five years old (though when he was an ardent Christian he pleaded to God for her and promised to raise her for him).

He has been so near insanity with his sin that he has even threatened suicide. My parents and I prevailed on him to drive down to your meetings last week, and he was much impressed with your sermons, and since Sunday he has said he knew he had done wrong, but through his pride and stubborn nature he is not willing to yield. He has promised to take us down again Sunday and—forgive me for making suggestions—but how I wish you might have some kind of a service Sunday asking for those who have wandered away and want to get back to the Lord to come forward to the altar, or some such service. My prayer is: "Anything, Lord, to bring him to thee." We will be at the morning service and I rather expect will stay for the evening service.

We are Methodists and members of ————————. I pray, Mr. Stidger, that Sunday may be the day of victory

in our home. Thanking you for your confidence and interest, I am,

A heartbroken wife,

The storm was buffeting this poor woman and her home and her child and her husband about. It was dashing their little home to pieces against the cliffs of life. She felt helpless in the sweep of it.

It was a week after I had received that letter, and Sunday night. As I was leaving the great auditorium of the camp grounds a pretty little woman came up to me timidly. She was leading by the hand a dear little girl about the age of my own baby. There were tears in her eyes. She was trembling with suppressed emotion. At first she could not speak. We stood in the darkness for a few minutes and I watched the shadows of evening play on the white sand dunes and the stars shining in the purple waters of the sea as I waited until she could command her feelings.

"Well," I asked her, "are you happy about something?"

"Yes," she replied, "I am the woman who wrote you that letter from ————. Did you get it?"

I told her that I had received it.

Then she told me of how her husband had that morning, following my invitation, risen in his place and, before a great crowd, with hundreds of others, walked up the aisles of the auditorium and knelt at the altar; that he had come home happy and laughing in his soul to be the same tender man that he had been before the unhappiness had come into his life. As she got to talking of what that thing meant to her home and to her baby and to her own life, she choked up and could scarcely speak at all. After a moment's silence she held out her hand and said: "I cannot tell you. I cannot talk. But you understand, don't you?"

Yes, I understood. I have always understood. I have understood from the beginning that, when the storms come into our lives and we seem swept on blasts that are so much stronger than we, swept in among the rocks by waves that are overpowering, swept in by primordial passions and sins and lusts, there is but one place to flee:

"I will haste me to a shelter, from the stormy wind and tempest."

"I will trust in the covert of thy wings."

God's Love for Us

The birds also teach God's love for us.

Jesus himself gave us the text: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

Of all the birds on earth the most despised is the sparrow, because it is so common. The sparrow has about twenty different species. I know five or six of them. There are the song sparrow, the vesper sparrow, the field sparrow, the white-throated sparrow, the common English sparrow, etc. It is a very common bird. It has five to six hatchings a year and from twenty to thirty new sparrows come forth. It is indeed a common bird. It is not a pretty bird, either in color or form or song. It eats of the dunghills. It is so common. It is despised and hunted and shot by man. All over the earth it is one of the outcast birds.

It is an outcast bird everywhere but in the Bible. In her chapter on the Bible, Mrs. Porter does not list the sparrow with the birds of "abomination." No! Why not? It is despised of man. She does not list it there because the Bible has given even the common sparrow—the meanest, lowest, ugliest, commonest of all birds—an exalted place. It has

told of how "even the sparrow" hath found her a nest in the temple. And Jesus himself declares that not even one sparrow falleth to earth without the Father's knowledge.

Anybody can love a beautiful scarlet tanager, or a Baltimore oriole, or a pretty wren, or a grosbeak, or a flashing redwing; anybody can love and admire a mighty eagle soaring along the river pathway; anybody can love the spotless white of a seagull; anybody can love a vibrant humming bird or a nightingale, sweet with dripping music; or a lark soaring in the skies, "a sightless song"; or a dove in a green tree at springtime, even though its note is mournful. Anybody can love the sweet, sad music of a whip-poor-will, or a yellow summer bird; but it takes a great Fatherheart, it takes our God, to love a sparrow, a common sparrow, so that not one falls to the earth without his notice.

And he not only loves us, but he has infinite power to help us when we need him. We can trust him for that forever. We can trust him, for he loves us with an everlasting love. We can trust him even when we do not know why he is doing certain things to us.

There is the story of the naturalist who was watching an eagle teach her eaglet to fly. The

nest was up on a high cliff. The naturalist noticed a lot of excitement and fluttering on the cliff, and he crept close above the cliff to see what was going on. He saw the mother eagle forcibly push her eaglet off the cliff to teach it to fly. Then she watched it with her eagle eye. When she saw that it was not going to bear itself up at the first attempt, she darted downward, and flying under the falling bird, gently swept up under it and let it rest on her broad, strong back. Then she carried it back to the cliff.

After a while she pushed it off again. The action seemed almost brutal, but the naturalist understood. Then the mother eagle watched it a second time as it struggled to fly, and succeeding but poorly at it. Then a second time she swept down under it before it hit the rocks below and gently let it alight on her broad back and carried it back to the cliff. A third time she pushed it off and repeated her performance of sweeping down under it before it was dashed to death, and again carried it on her strong wings back to safety, and finally in this manner taught it to fly.

And so, figuratively speaking, it is that God often teaches us to fly. No matter how much we may misunderstand what is happening to us,

no matter how helpless we are, no matter how far we fall, no matter how much danger looms ahead, no matter how much everybody and everything—even God himself—may seem to have forsaken us, we may always know that God is still up there "keeping watch above his own"; still up there on the cliff, watching to see the moment when we need him most; still up there watching, and not one of us shall fall without his notice; not one of us needs him and cries unto him that he will not come; still up there knowing our weaknesses; knowing that our attempts to soar and fly are, after all, but feeble attempts; still up there with his great strong wings of love, ready to fly down under us and catch us when we fall; and shelter us in the shadow of his wings; and carry us up, up, up to heights of glory and hope and everlasting peace.

He it is who gives the gull such fearless wings; he who puts such flame in the sea gull's breast as makes that glorious bird swing to the storm with laughter in its heart, swing out on the trackless shoreless deep as if the law of gravitation to it were but a little thing.

To those who have lived by or sailed the sea streams the gull is ever and always a new adventure, whether one sees it days out beyond

the furthermost sentinel or rocky island or tumbling its white winged beauty over a bay or inland lake. One of the most beautiful things I ever saw was the changing reflection of the blue, green, purple waters of Lake Tahoe on the under white of a sea gull's wings.

I called that beautiful thing to the attention of a friend, and he said, "Yes, and did it ever occur to you that that gull's wings have to be clean in order to reflect the waters of the lake?" And so, I take it, we too have to be clean and white and pure in order to reflect the beauty and glory of God's love to folks.

Far out at sea on the way home from the Orient the sea gulls met us. They were not land gulls but what are called by the sailors sea birds. They live at sea most of the time, and rest on the waves when they are weary with flying, and it is a beautiful thing to see their long, slender, graceful wings spread as they skim the waters and finally light, like a downy feather, without a ripple of blue water breaking the surface.

Birds of the boundless deep,
Where do you rest when you sleep?
Forever and ever you seem
To swing on the ocean's stream
And ever and ever your broad wings sweep
Over the restless, boundless deep.

"We rest when the night is near,
Rest without thought or fear;
Drop to our rest
On the great broad breast
Of the ocean's swing and sweep,
In the ocean's love and keep."

Birds of the ocean way,
How can you laugh and play?
How can you flash and swing
Your beautiful spread of wing
With never a thought of the far-
Flung leagues where the mountains are,
When land is so far away
And waning the light of day?

"We spread our wings on the winds of light
And rest in the calm of the starlit night;
The deep is our habitat—we fly
By a faith that lightens the earth and sky;
For faith is a flame that burns in the breast
Of a creature out on the boundless quest."

Then teach me, bird of the ocean blue,
The faith that burns in the heart of you—
Teach me to spread my wings and fly
Out on the deep when the storms beat high;
Teach me to fly and be at rest
Wherever my path, on the Father's breast.

Teach me, bird of the boundless deep,
That faith will ever and ever keep;
Though stable ways of the land be far;
And never the sky shows out a star;
Teach me that faith is a flame in the breast—
A flame that is urge and a flame that is rest.

CHAPTER IX

BURBANK AND THE BOOK

Spiritual Principles of Luther Burbank

FEW people know Luther Burbank as a great spiritual man. They know him as the great plant-breeder and as the great scientist, but few know him as a man who consciously or unconsciously works in the plant world on a solid foundation of great spiritual principles that have their birth in the Bible, a book for which this great man professes the deepest reverence, and which he reads continually.

Readers may wonder why I put these two concluding chapters on Luther Burbank and John Muir in this book. I answer, that I do it with a purpose, and that purpose is to link the two great out-of-doors men of this day and age with the great out-of-doors men of the Book of books. I do not mean by that to place them alongside of the prophets and poets of the Bible, but only to show that any men who are close to nature are also close to God and truth and righteousness. I insert them here also because I

Photo by H. Hugo

Climbing the dune

have in recent years been so deeply impressed with the great spiritual truths that guided the lives of these two great modern men of nature. There is some close connecting link between a love for God and a love for nature. I have discovered it in the lives of these two men. Each man, as he has discovered the secrets of nature, has been drawn closer to God, just as were Isaiah, Job, David, and John of old. Those who know, and knew, Burbank and Muir intimately testify to the deep spirituality of their lives. Indeed, they worked with great spiritual forces.

One of the most impressive things about Mr. Burbank's personality, his methods of living, his work, and his thought world to me is the spiritual impress of it on the whole. One feels when he is in the presence of Mr. Burbank that he is dealing with a great spiritual dynamo; a tremendous spiritual medium. I have not come to the place where I can follow Lodge into the spiritual world and have communion with folks over there, but I had the strangest feeling as I stood in the presence of Luther Burbank, and heard of the wonders he has worked, that here was an uncanny man, a man who has somehow reached out and gotten hold of invisible forces and harnessed them. And yet he

is none of that. He is just a simple, plain man who loves nature and who dislikes more than anything else to be called "uncanny." That he cannot abide. And yet there are great fundamental spiritual truths at the very basis of his work, truths that obtrude themselves into your heart by their very apparentness.

The first observation I want to make of the spiritual implications of his work with plant life is that ofttimes *out of a weed may spring a beautiful flower*. Time and time again Mr. Burbank has developed a beautiful flower of purity and whiteness and perfume out of a despised weed that has been an outcast and a leper for centuries. An instance of this one finds in the Shasta daisy; a flower despised by farmers in the East, but one which he has developed until it takes a place among the most graceful and beautiful of all.

In Mr. Harwood's book, New Creations in Plant Life,[1] the most understanding and sympathetic of all the books written about Mr. Burbank, and written after careful months of living with him in intimate friendship, the author, in speaking of this possibility that ever exists in the rankest weed and outcast plant, uses this

[1] The Macmillan Company, Publishers, New York.

striking sentence: "Now and then out of the muck of some slum, reeking with moral filth, and developing with unwholesome rapidity the seeds of anarchy and crime, a white, pure life springs up, persists, maintains its guard against all temptations, comes back, mayhap in later years to help redeem its birthplace." And so it is with the human life. Sometimes out of the muck and slime of tenement districts, out of the swamps, the black swamps of human life, a white flower of celestiallike purity may spring to redeem its surroundings.

A second spiritual principle that Mr. Burbank finds in the world in which he works is the principle that you can redeem a plant *by giving it a new foundation on which to work.*

He finds a certain fruit with a high percentage of sugar and flavor which seems to be degenerating. What can be done to save it? "Why, give it a new foundation on which to work and live and build. So he grafts it into a new life. He gives it the regenerative power of new blood and this redeems the plant." And nowhere does he fail to leave the implication that this is true in human life. And nowhere can a thoughtful man fail to catch the implication that a human life that is degenerated and that is losing grip and losing hope, grafted on

the life of the sturdy, pure stock of Jesus the Christ will be redeemed and started on a new life with a new foundation. It is a thrilling parallel; infinite with possibilities.

A third spiritual simile is that found in trees. It might be stated in this sentence: *"It is what is inside the soul that tells for eternity."* It was in his experimentation with trees that this principle was enunciated. It was in trying to develop a tree with wood hard enough for commercial purposes. In this work the most important thing is the grain. You cannot tell from the outside of a tree, according to Mr. Burbank, just what the inside grain will be. It may be light or dark; it may be close-grained or coarse; it may be plain or beautiful; but you cannot tell from the outside what is on the inside, and it is what is on the inside that counts in the manufacturing of various commercial articles.

And so it is in the light of eternity. It is what is on the inside of a human soul that counts in the eyes of God. One may be fair without and well groomed, and have such standing in a community as kings might envy, but the supreme test of eternity is what is on the inside of a human soul.

Mr. Burbank himself is the best human illus-

tration of this spiritual principle I ever saw. He always wears old clothes. In fact, if one met him on the highway alone, he might take him for a loafer or a tramp. All he would need would be a roll over his shoulder. His clothes are frequently covered with dirt because he is so often on his knees among his flowers. But inside Luther Burbank is a veritable spiritual king.

A fourth spiritual principle is that *"By careful breeding, food and love, the most insignificant plant on earth may become the most significant."* It was by searching out the humble, unobtrusive little golden California poppy, that hid its sweetness in the desert air, that Mr. Burbank found a streak of crimson in one petal, and from that tiny streak he developed a full-blown crimson poppy. It was from the wild beach plum, a knotty, gnarled, bitter-to-the-taste, sour, and insignificant outcast, that he developed the giant new plum that is five hundred times the size of the beach plum. It was from the wild Arizona potato, so knotty and small and insignificant that they were no larger than peanuts, that Luther Burbank developed the great, new Burbank potato to its full perfection. From a black desert potato, no larger and with about the same looks as a dried-up

raisin, came this great, fruity, sugary product. It was from the insignificant wild daisy, scrawny and small and despised, that he developed the beautiful Shasta daisy. And so on and on the story might continue.

And so one is led to see that no child is so puny or so ugly or so unfortunate or so insignificant-looking but that, with love and care and food and sunlight, that child may develop into a miracle of power on earth among men. And what is true of a child is true of a man or a woman, as Jesus undoubtedly knew when he forgave so tenderly the woman taken in adultery.

The fifth spiritual lesson is the summing-up of the relations of breeding plant life to that of breeding children in spiritual life. It may be stated in four sentences: *"The child is the most sensitive plant on earth"; "The child is the most plastic plant on earth"; "It will respond to repetition just as a plant will";* and *"Once fixed, a quality or spiritual power and a trait will stay with a child forever."*

Mr. Burbank gave me these four spiritual principles from his own lips as we got to talking about his hobby, which is children.

The sixth great spiritual thought is that if one looks patiently enough for and searches

in love he may *find the soul, hidden though it may be, of any plant, human or otherwise.*

One of the most thrilling stories of Mr. Burbank's work is that of the discovery of the soul of the dahlia. As his friends themselves tell it, one day he was walking along in his gardens at dusk, that part of the day when perfumes are strongest in California. One who has driven in the evening will remember this fact. As he was walking among his dahlia beds he suddenly detected a strangely sweet odor. Upon discovering the particular plant that was giving off this perfume, faint though it was, rather than the usual disagreeable odor of the dahlia, he isolated it at once and developed it.

Another evening he was walking among his verbenas, and he caught an elusive scent. He got down on his knees and searched for it all of one evening, but failed to find it. He tried time and time again when he caught that strange scent and, finally, in a burst of joy found the plant. It had the subtle fragrance of the trailing arbutus. He had "found the soul" of both of these flowers. Flowers that he thought never had had any odor but an ugly one he discovered had wrapped up in their beautiful bodies and petals a wonderfully sweet perfume.

And so, the implication always is from Mr.

Burbank, that so it may be with what seems to be a soulless and a heartless human child or man.

A seventh great spiritual truth suggested by Mr. Burbank is that a plant-breeder is "an explorer into the infinite." How much more so then is one who deals with the plant called a human being "an explorer into the infinite"!

The eighth and last great spiritual principle with which Mr. Burbank works in the plant world is that expressed in a sentence I heard him use: *"I have been compelled to put the old selves of some plants to death that out of this death there might come forth a new resurrection."* And therein he has summed up the principle that has made Calvary and the third day afterward the most active spiritual principle in the hearts of humanity. And Mr. Burbank has come to this conclusion through literally millions of separate experiments. He has crossed and recrossed. He has, as his biographer says, "Combined each with the other, joining them in a union as intimate as life, as powerful as death. For he was compelled to put to death their old selves—their long life habits, their manner of life—even their form and texture, all must give way—and from this death he would bring forth a new resurrection."

His own statements prove the deep spiritual impulses of the man:

My theory of the laws and underlying principles of plant creation is, in many respects, opposed to the theories of the materialists. I am a sincere believer in a higher power than man's. Every atom, molecule, plant, animal or planet is only an aggregation of organized unit forces, held in place by stronger forces, thus holding them for a time latent, though teeming with inconceivable power. All life on our planet is, so to speak, just on the outer fringe of this infinite ocean of force. The universe is not half dead, but all alive.

Reverting to his love for a little child, we recall the picture of Joaquin Miller, another of our California giants:

"Then reaching his hands he said, lowly,
'Of such is my kingdom,' and then
Took the little brown babes in the holy
White hands of the Saviour of men.

"Put his face down to theirs and caressed them,
Held them close to his breast as in prayer;
Put their cheeks to his cheeks and, so blessed them;
With baby hands hid in his hair."

And, allowing that verse to bring vividly back once again that greatest of all scenes in the life of the Master, I want to link up all that I have said of the spiritual forces in this man's life, and of his love for little children in the final quotation from one of his addresses: "I

love sunshine, the blue sky, trees, flowers, mountains, green meadows, running brooks, the ocean with its waves softly rippling along the sandy beach, or when pounding the rocky cliffs with its thunder and roar, the birds of the field, waterfalls, the rainbow, the dawn, the noonday, and the evening sunset—but *children above them all.*"

Photo by William L. Stu[illegible]

"I like sunshine, the blue sky, trees"—*Burbank*

CHAPTER X

MUIR AND THE MASTER

THOSE who knew John Muir, those who followed his life from his boyhood on, those with whom I have talked out here in his great West, some of whom knew him when he used to visit a little Methodist church in California, where he found his wife singing in the choir, that wife who was later his constant companion on his mountain trips; those who know his books, know that in walking the high passes, in climbing the Shastas, the Raniers, the Saint Helens, the Glaciers, and Meadows and Bee Pastures, John Muir was always walking with God. He might well have stopped amid the great silences of some vast canyon, or amid the solemn stillness of some one of the more than fifteen hundred glacial lakes that he has found in the Sierras; or he might have stopped under the thundering of a Nevada Falls in his beloved Yosemite; or he might have lifted his eyes to the skies one of the several nights he was storm-bound on

Shasta's steaming crater, or that other night when he climbed the great Redwood to listen to the storm; he might have paused and said, amid the silences or amid the thundering:

> "I hear and to myself I say,
> 'Why, God walks with me every day.'"

For that is literally what God did and what Muir did. God and John Muir walked together on earth among the sequoias that were born, according to Edwin Markham and Muir himself, before Christ; and over the Mono Pass; and across the Glacial Meadows and Bee Gardens; over the glaciers of Alaska, up and down the Atlantic Coast, and across the continent; and now, that he is gone, he walks with God amid the stars. That is sure. That was inevitable. No man can walk with God here and not walk with God over there.

It Was No Miracle

I have often said that it was no miracle that John Muir was what he was. Indeed, it would have been a miracle if he had *not* been what he was. It is the same with Luther Burbank. It is the same with Joan of Arc. It is the same with any great character. They are molded in youth. If they walk with God in youth, they

will walk with God through life, and then in turn they will walk with him when the walking is along the celestial ways.

I have been told by Luther Burbank himself that one of the first toys that he had to play with, when he was a child seven years old, was a cactus plant. He kept this plant a long time. It was to him what a dog is to most boys or a doll to a girl child. It was his to care for and to water and to love. It is a singular thing that, later in life, it was with this very plant that he was to make one of his greatest contributions to humanity. As one reads the life of Joan of Arc he finds that she "listened to God talk," and, because she listened to God talk, she led her nation out of its bondage and made herself unconsciously one of the greatest heroines of all time. John Muir had a strange experience when he was a boy.

From Scotland to Wisconsin in his early years his playworld was out of doors. The birds and animals of home and the woods and the fields were his playfellows. During a long overland trip to Wisconsin John Muir lived out of doors, hunted, learned to love the trees, the fields, the mountains, the prairies, and the inhabitants thereof—under the ground and above the ground—as he loved nothing else on earth.

With the particular early experiences that John Muir had, with the particular early experiences that Luther Burbank had, with the particular early influences of Joan of Arc's life it seems to me that it would have been a miracle if they had been anything other than what they were when they grew in years and stature.

One night as they were crossing the American continent there appeared a particularly beautiful auroral light of wonderful colors. The old Scotch father, calling the family to come outside said to them: "Come! Come, mother! Come, bairns! and see the glory of God. All the sky is clad in a robe of red light. Look straight up to the crown where the robes are gathered. Hush, and wonder and adore, for surely this is the clothing of the Lord himself, and perhaps he will even now appear looking down from his high heavens." What lad could live under such a reverent father and atmosphere and not learn to see God through nature and not learn to love both?

When I talked with Mr. Burbank of John Muir, his great friend, he kept saying over and over: "John Muir was a great man; John Muir was more than that: he was a good man. John Muir was a great man; he was more than that: he was a good man!"

John Muir's Reverence for God

In a wonderful chapter on "The Water-Ousel" he tells of that beautiful little water-bird; of how it lives in the outposts of nature all alone; of how it inhabits the far-flung glaciers, cold and bleak and desolate; of how it darts in and out and under and through the densest falls; of how it flies in ice-caverns without a spot of light; of how he has found them from Mexico to Alaska, and then adds with reverence: "And throughout the whole of their beautiful lives they interpret all that we in our unbelief call terrible in the utterances of torrents and storms, as only varied expressions of God's eternal love."

One day in Alaska, when he was studying a glacier that was later named for him (as has been a beautiful forest of redwoods near San Francisco), he was particularly impressed, and, following a vivid and scintillating description of the blue and gleaming ice of the glacier, he says, "We rejoiced in the possession of so blessed a day, and came away with a feeling that in very foundational truth we had been in one of God's own temples and had seen him and heard him working and preaching like a man."

He speaks of a scene in Alaska when he and

Mr. Young met a new tribe, and after the missionary had spoken Mr. Muir was asked to speak. He told them of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God, and an old chief in replying said: "I have often been caught in a storm and held in camp until there was nothing to eat, but when I reached home and got warm and had a good meal, then my body felt good. For a long time my heart has been hungry and cold, but to-night your words have warmed my heart, and given it a good meal, and now my heart feels good."

He tells with deep reverence a story of a living example of the atonement which he heard of among the Indians of Alaska. An old chief sacrificed himself for his tribe.

There had been a war all summer between two strong tribes. Fall had come and the war was not settled. One old chief saw that, unless it stopped soon and his people had a chance to lay in their winter supply of berries and salmon, they would starve, so he went out under a truce flag to ask the chief of the other tribe to stop and go home, telling him the reason for this request.

The other chief said that his tribe would not stop fighting because ten more of his men had been killed than of the enemy's. Then the chief

said to him: "You know that I am a chief. I am worth ten of your men. Kill me in place of them and let us have peace."

This sacrificial request was granted, and there in front of the contending tribes the old chief was shot.

When Mr. Young and Mr. Muir came to this tribe they told them the story and then added: "Yes, your words are good. The Son of God, the Chief of chiefs, the Maker of all the world, must be worth more than all mankind put together; therefore, when his blood was shed the salvation of the world was made sure."

One of his most burning descriptions is that of the morning that he discovered Glacier Bay. It was a supreme hour even in this great man's eventful life, when glaciers, and giant trees, and triumphant moments on mountain peaks at the top of the world were everyday experiences with him. I think that I have seldom seen him so moved as he was on this tremendous day.

He speaks of the calm dawn, the frosty clearness of the morning, the brooding stillness; and amid this stillness the thunder of new-born icebergs; of the fact that they did not see the sunrise because they were beneath the ice-cliffs; then of the sudden appearance of a red light burning with a strange splendor, an unearthly

splendor, from the top of the utmost peak. Then he tells of how this light began to spread over everything until the "whole range of ice peaks was illuminated with this strange red glow like a crimson, furred Alpin glow."

"We turned away from that scene, joining the outgoing bergs, while 'Gloria in excelsis' still seemed to be sounding over all the white landscape, and our burning hearts were ready for any fate, feeling that, whatever the future might have in store, the treasuries we had gained this glorious morning would enrich our lives forever."

His strange sympathy with all things that breathe and live is illustrated with the story of a school of great whales that he saw once. One seldom thinks to waste any sympathy on a whale. One has a feeling that a whale is big enough to take care of itself in any and all weather. But as John Muir watched this great school of monsters he makes a comment that for sheer warm-heartedness I think seldom has been equaled. His heart was even big enough to take in a school of whales. It was said of Lincoln that "his heart was as big as the world, but there was no room in it for the memory of a single wrong." And so I might say that the heart of John Muir was as big as the world;

and there was room in it not only for mountains, and seas and giant sequoias, and tiny flowers, and mountain sheep, and Shasta lilies, and tiny snow flowers, and Ousel birds, but there was room in it for a poor lumbering leviathan of the seas:

"But think of the hearts of those whales, beating warm against the sea, day and night, through dark and light, on and on for centuries; how the red blood must gush and gurgle in and out, bucketfuls, barrelfuls at a beat!"

His sense of humor was keen and he knew how to express it with a flashing sentence. He was describing a deserted mining camp in California. There was little left of what had once been a flourishing city in the old days. A tall chimney still remained with mining machinery rusted and ruined. Coyotes wandered unmolested through the city streets, "and of all the busy throng that had so lavishly spent their time and money here only one man remains—a lone bachelor with one suspender."

Where can be found a more vivid, a shorter, sharper picture of a drip of water "petering out to a dribble at the end" than that phrase, "a lone bachelor with one suspender"?

And then he shoots this striking epigram. It is illustrative of another tremendous lesson he

learned from nature: "But, after all, effort, however misapplied, is better than stagnation. Better toil blindly, beating every stone in turn for grains of gold, whether they contain any or not, than lie down in apathetic decay."

And so this great out-of-doors man of the mountains learned, even amid earthly things, to walk with God. Nature was his great schoolhouse, but he did not stop at that schoolhouse. He went on into the High School of Humanity. And in that high school he found a host of friends who forever clung to him because they loved him and found him a true Christian gentleman at heart; and finally he passed on into the College of God's Communion, and forever there he shall walk and talk, and study and dream and sketch and learn and love and live through eternity. When he walked up the mountains he never walked away from God. His face was always turned toward the Creator of all the wonders and beauties that he saw, and he never failed to give God credit for his handiwork. He knew whence it had come.